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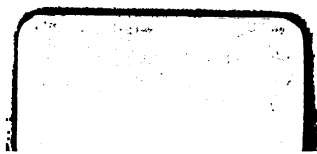
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THE RISING OF THE TIDE



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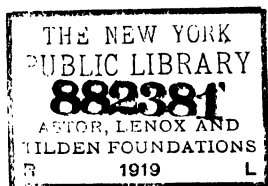
THE RISING OF THE TIDE

THE STORY OF SABINSPORT

BY
IDA M. TARBELL

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THE RISING OF THE TIDE

HOW THE WAR CAME TO SABINSPORT

CHAPTER I

"THE town is going to the Devil, and the worst of it is nobody will admit it. You won't. You sit there and smile at me, as if you didn't mind having Jake Mulligan and Reub Cowder pry open ballot boxes. You know those two birds are robbing this village every hour of the day. Nobody with pep enough to sit up and fight 'em. Rotten selfishness, that's what ails this town. People getting rich here and spending their money in the city. Women won't even buy their hats here — starving the stores. Can't support a decent theater — don't bring a good singer once a year. Everybody goes to the city, and we have to feed on movies.

"Try to raise an issue, and you get laughed at. Treated like a kid. Tell me to 'cut it out,' not disturb things. Nice place for a man who'd like to help a community! I'm going to get out. Can't stand it. Honest, Dick, I'm losing my self-respect."

"Wrong, Ralph. You're spoiling for a fresh turn with the muck rake. You can't make a garden with one tool. You must have several. I'm serious. You're like the men in the mines that will tackle but one job, always swing a pick. The muck rake did its job in Sabinsport for some time. You've got to pass on to the next tool."

"I don't get you. You're like all the rest. You're lying down. I'm ashamed of you, Parson. Get out of here. You'll end in corrupting me."

"No, only persuading you that taking a city calls for more weapons than one.")

Silence fell for a moment. Ralph Gardner was tired. Getting out the daily issue of the Sabinsport *Argus* was, as he often said, "Some job." To be your own editor-in-chief, leader writer, advertising agent and circulation manager for the only daily in a town of 15,000 or more means hard work and a lot of it. Ralph loved it, "ate it up," they said in the shop. It was only when calm settled over Sabinsport and he felt no violent reaction from his spirited attacks on town iniquities that he was depressed. This was one of these periods. The year before he had fought and won for the Progressive Party of the District a smashing victory. He was eager to follow it up with attacks on the special grafts of the two men who for years had run the town and vicinity. He had ousted their candidates from the County and State tickets. He meant to wrest the town from them, but he couldn't get the support he needed. The town had lain down on him. He didn't understand it and it fretted him.

Now here was his best and wisest friend, advising waiting. He hung his handsome head in sulky silence.

"What a boy!" thought the Reverend Richard Ingraham. They were the best of friends, this eager, active, confident young editor and this cool, humorous-eyed, thoughtful young parson. Wide apart in birth, in type of education, in their contacts with the world, they were close in a love of decency and justice, in contempt for selfishness and vulgarity. Both were accidents in Sabinsport, and so looked at the town in a more or less detached way. This fact, their instinctive trust and liking for each other, and the clinching force of the great tragedy in which they had first met had made them friends.

Ralph Gardner was only 28. He had graduated six years before at a Western university where for the moment the sins of contemporary business and politics absorbed the interest of the greater part of faculty and students. There was a fine contempt for all existing expressions of life, a fine confidence in their power to create social institutions as well as forms of art which would sweep the world of what they called the "worn out." Whatever their professions, they went forth to lay bare the futility and selfishness and greed of the present world. They had no perspective, no charity, no experience, but they had zeal, courage, and the supporting vision of a world where no man knew want, no woman dragged a weary life through factory or mill, no child was not busy and happy.

Never has there poured into the country a group more convinced of its own righteousness and the essential selfishness of all who did not see with their eyes or share their confidence in the possibility of regeneration through system. Like revolutionists in all ages they felt in themselves the power to make over the world and like them they carried their plans carefully diagramed in their pockets.

Gardner was one of the first of the crop of St. Georges in his university. He had chosen journalism for his profession. He began at the bottom on an important Progressive journal of a big Western city. He worked up from cub reporter to a desk in the editor's room. But he chafed at the variety of things which occupied the editorial attention, at the tendency to confine reform to an inside page or even drop it altogether. There were moments when he suspected his crusading spirit was regarded as a nuisance. And finally in a fit of disgust and zeal he put his entire inheritance into the Sabinsport *Argus*.

Ralph had a real reason in buying the *Argus*. The

town was ruled by two of the cleverest men in the State, giving him a definite enemy. It was not so large but what, as he planned it, he could know every man, woman and child in it. It had the varied collection of problems common to a prosperous Middle-West town, settled at the end of the eighteenth century, and later made rich by coal mines and iron mills. Ralph saw in Sabinsport a perfect model of the dragon he was after, a typical union of Business and Politics, a typical disunion of labor and capital. It was to be his laboratory. His demonstration of how to make a perfect town out of a rotten one should be a model for the world.

In his ambitions and his attacks Richard Ingraham had been his steady backer, and at the same time his surest brake. It would be too much to say that he had always kept him from running his head into stone walls, but the Parson had never failed Ralph even when he made a fool of himself. He never had shown or felt less interest because often the young editor ignored his advice. The relation between the two had grown steadily in confidence and affection. A regular feature of their day was an hour together in Ralph's office after the paper was on the press, and he was getting his breath. They were spending this hour together now, a late afternoon hour of July 28, 1914. It was a pleasant place to talk on a hot afternoon. The second floor back of the three-story building which housed the *Argus* opened by long windows on to a wide veranda, a touch of the Southern influence in building which was still to be seen in several places in the town. The Parson had been quick to see that this veranda properly latticed would make a capital workroom for Ralph in the summer, and had by insistence overcome the young editor's indifference to his

surroundings, and secured for him a cool and quiet office and a delightful summer lounging room. Here they were sitting now, Ralph's feet on the veranda railing, his head hanging — dejection in every muscle.

"Ralph," said the Rev. Richard, "it's your method of attack not your cause, I doubt. I don't believe you can win by going at this thing in your usual way. You must find a new approach. Mulligan and Cowder are no fools, and if you open on them from your old line, they'll be ready for you."

"There's only one way to do this thing," Ralph shouted hotly. "Show 'em up. Shame the town for tolerating them, fight them to a finish. If I could get the proofs that they opened those ballot boxes, do you suppose I'd be quiet? Not on your life."

"You won't get the proof."

"You mean you won't help me to get it?"

"I do."

The Rev. Richard could be very final and very disarming. Ralph knew he could not count on him for help in tracing the gossip. He did not suspect what was true, that his friend knew even the details of the bit of law-breaking Jake Mulligan had carried out. It had come to him by the direct confession of one of his young Irish friends, Micky Flaherty. Micky had listened at the Boys' Club, which Ingraham ran, to a clear and forceful explanation of why the ballot box must be sacred. He had given the talk at the first rumor that there had been a raid on the ballot box by Jake, for the direct purpose of finding exactly how the town stood towards giving him and Reuben Cowder in perpetuity the water, gas and electric light franchises, which they had secured long before Sabinsport dreamed of their importance. He had thought it entirely probable that the rumor was founded on

truth, also quite probable that one or more of the likely young politicians in his club had been used as a go-between.

His talk did more than he had even dreamed. Micky was struck with guilt. He was a good Catholic, and confession was necessary to his peace of mind. It was not to the priest, but to Dick, he went; telling him in detail, and with relish too, it must be acknowledged, how at midnight he alone had stolen from the clerk's office in the town hall the ballot boxes, and how he had worked with Jake and two or three faithful followers, carefully piecing together the torn ballots, until a complete roster of the election was tabulated. When this nice piece of investigation was finished and thoroughly finished, Micky had returned the boxes.

Ingraham had never for a moment considered a betrayal of Micky's confession. For one reason, he was keen enough to know it would be useless. Micky's sense of guilt might recognize the confessional, but it did not, and would not, recognize the witness stand. He had no intention of giving his friend the slightest help in unearthing the scandal. He was convinced, as he told him, that a new form of attack must be found.

"You're a queer one, Dick," fretted Ralph. "You don't believe for a moment that Jake and Reub are anything but a pair of pirates. You aren't afraid. What is it?"

"I suppose, Ralph, it is partly because I *like* Jake and don't despair of him."

"Like him! Like him! Do you know what he calls your mission over on the South Side — sacrilegious rascal. He calls it the Holy Coal Bin. Nice way to talk about a man who saved a neighborhood from freezing to death because he's too blamed obstinate and narrow to listen to the leaders of his own working-men. 'Runs his business to suit himself!' Think of

that in this day! Those men and women would have died of cold if you hadn't turned your club basement into coal bins. And now he laughs at you."

"Do you know who paid for that coal; most of it at least?" asked Ingraham.

"You did, confound you. Of course you did. Everybody knows that."

"No, three quarters of it Jake paid for, on condition I wouldn't tell the men. Couldn't see them suffer. Jake has possibilities. And then there is Jack. You know how he loves that boy. You know how fine and able Jack is. He has already swung the old man into modernizing the 'Emma.' If we will stand by him, I believe in time he will have reformed his father. Give him a chance at least. If you don't do that, I am certain that eventually you will drive Jack himself away from you, and we must not lose Jack. Moreover, you have got to remember that Jake and Reuben made this town."

"Nothing to recommend them in that," Ralph growled. "They own it from the ground to the electric wires; and they use it twenty-four hours out of the day — and then some."

"Listen, Ralph. It was Jake Mulligan who opened the coal mines, and for years almost starved while he brought them to a paying point. It was Reuben Cowder that brought in the railroad to carry out the coal. This town never would have had the railroad if it had not been for Cowder. You know perfectly well how little help either man has had from the old timers. Everything that is modern here has come through those two men. Moreover, they love Sabinsport. Did you ever hear of Jake's celebration when the water works were finished in the '90's? He is never done talking about the water works. His wife used to say he celebrated them every time he turned a

tap — water for turning a tap to a man who had carried every gallon in buckets from a spring by the barn for years and years! Pure water to a man who had seen a town he loved swept by typhoid! You ought to realize what it took for him to bring that about; you who are trying to do things here now. He could not budge the town. He and Reuben practically put up the money for the water. They had learned by the epidemic what bad water meant. They argued that towns subject to typhoid would finally be shunned, and they put through the waterworks with nine-tenths of the respectable men and women against them. Afraid of taxes! The town argued that it would not happen again, and that anyway it was the will of the Lord! Of course they bought votes to put it through, and of course they own the franchise, and of course they have made money. I don't defend their methods, but I can't help feeling that Sabinsport owes them something.

"It is the same story about gas and electricity and trolleys. These two men have planned and fought and bought and put things through, while the respectable have been afraid to go ahead, lest they should lose something. Now the respectable grumble. I must think that respectability and thrift are largely responsible for Jake and Reuben."

"Confound your historical sense, Dick; it is always slowing you up. If you would concentrate on the present, you would be the greatest asset this town ever had."

"Drop it, Ralph. What's the news?"

"There it is — more interested in a pack of quarrelling Dagoes 5,000 miles away than living things at home. What's the use when your best friend's like that? What has it got to do with us in Sabinsport if Austria has declared war on Serbia — what's Serbia

anyhow? A little worn-out, scrappy country without a modern notion in its head."

"Do you mean," cried Dick, springing up, "that Austria has declared war?"

"That's what this says. It just came in,"—flinging a yellow sheet across the table.

"My God! Man, don't you know what that means?"

"Well, I suppose it might mean a good-sized war, but I don't believe it. They'll pull things out; always have before, ever since I can remember. What if Germany gets in, as you said it would be the other day; what's that? They'll clean up a little affair like Serbia quick enough; teach her to stop running around with a chip on her shoulder. And no matter, I tell you, Parson; it's nothing to Sabinsport, and Sabinsport is our business. If the world is to be made decent, you've got to begin at home. Don't come bothering me about wars in Europe! I've got war enough if I root out Mulligan and Cowder."

But the parson wasn't listening. His face was whiter than usual, and its lines had grown stern. "Good night, Ralph," he said curtly; "just telephone me to-night, will you, if there's more news. I think I'll go out to the 'Emma' after supper."

The Reverend Richard walked down the street without seeing people — something unheard of for him.

Tom Sabins, going home, said to his wife, "The parson is worried. Met him and he didn't see me. Has anything happened at the mines, do you know?"

But Mrs. Sabins said she hadn't heard of trouble. Maybe Micky had been up to mischief again.

And they both laughed affectionately. The parson never looked worried, they often had noticed, unless somebody had been very bad or there had been an accident in mill or mine.

But it was not things at home that sent the parson blind and deaf down the street. He was the one man in Sabinsport, outside of the keeper of the fruit store and a half dozen miners over the hill, who had some understanding of the awful possibilities of Austria's declaration of war. His knowledge came from the years he had lived as a student in England — the summers he had spent tramping through Middle Europe.

If Richard Ingraham's education had taken a different turn from that of the average American youth, like Ralph Gardner, it still was a kind common enough among us. What had been exceptional about it was the way in which it had been intensified and lengthened by circumstances of health and family. Dick was an orphan, whose youth had been spent with his guardian, an elderly and scholarly man of means, in one of those charming, middle-west towns settled early in the nineteenth century by New Englanders, their severity tempered by a sprinkling of Virginians and Kentuckians. Great Rock, as the town was called from a conspicuous bluff on the river, was planned for a big city; but the railroad failed it, and it remained a quiet town, where a few men and women ripened into happy, dignified old age, but from which youth invariably fled. Dick had lived there, until he entered college at seventeen, in one of the finest of the old houses, set in big lawns, shaded by splendid, sweeping elms. "The most beautiful elms in the United States are not in New England," Dick used to tell his college friends, when they exclaimed over campus elms. "They're in the Middle West." And he was right.

Dick's guardian had set out to give the boy a thorough training in those things he thought made for happiness and usefulness. He had read with him from babyhood until Dick could no more go without books than without food. He had started him early in lan-

guages. He had given him horses, and, an unusual accomplishment, as Dick afterwards learned, had trained him to walking. A tramping trip by the two of them had been one of Dick's joys from the time he could remember. He did not know then that his guardian had more than pleasure in view by these trips. It was only later that he discovered that the regular outside life into which he had been trained was the older man's wise way of counteracting a possible development of the disease of which both his parents had died, and which it was believed he had inherited.

When the time came, Dick had gone East to college, and from there he was sent for two years or more of Europe, as his taste might dictate. At the end of his first year his guardian had died. It left the boy quite alone and wholly bewildered. He had never thought of life without this firm, kind, wise, counseling power. He had done what had been suggested, and always found joy in it. He had never really wanted anything in life, as he could remember. His guardian had foreseen everything. And now what was he? A boy of 23, with comfortable means, a passion for reading, for travel and for people, and that was all. He must have a profession. It was his need of a backing, as well as a combination of æsthetic and the æsthete in him, with possibly something of environment — for he happened to be at Oxford when news of his guardian's death came — that decided him to go into the Church.

Dick worked hard in term time, but all his long and short holidays he spent tramping Central Europe. This had been his guardian's request.

"You will come back some day to your own land to work, Richard. My own judgment of you is that you will find your greatest interest in shaping whatever profession you choose to meet the new forms of social

progress which each generation works out. I think this because you so love people. You'll never be content, as I have been, with books and solitude. I don't think you realize how full your life has been of human relations, or how you have depended on them, so I urge you to go among people in your holidays, common people, to be one of them; and do not hurry your return. You are young. Take time to find your place."

Dick had faithfully followed this advice. He had spent six years in Europe without returning to the United States. He was thirty when he came back to take a church in a prosperous and highly energetic community. One year had been enough. They kept him busy from morning until night with their useful activities. To this he did not object; but while so active he had been chilled to the bone by his failure to get spiritual reactions from his parishioners. Moreover, he had been unable to establish anything like companionship, as he had known it, with any one in his church. He resigned, giving as his reason: "I am not earning your money. I don't know how." It was a sad blow to more than one member of St. Luke's, for while they were a little afraid of him (which, if Dick had known, would have made a difference), they were also enormously proud of him.

His failure turned him to Great Rock, which he had never had the heart to visit since his guardian's death. There was a girl there he had always carried in a shadowy way in his heart, the only girl he ever saw in the dreams which sometimes disturbed him — a fair, frank, lovely thing, he remembered her to have been, Annie Dunne. For the first time in his life he wanted his mate. He couldn't face life again without one. He would go and find her. Why, why, he asked himself, had he not done this before? It was so clear that it was she that he needed. He did not ask himself if

he loved her. He knew he did. As for Annie's loving him? Had he waited too long? Every mile of his journey westward was filled with recollections of their youth, the summer evenings on the veranda, the winter evenings by the fireside. And her letters, never many, but how dear and friendly and intimate they had been! He felt so sure of her, almost as if she were telling him, "I knew you would come."

It was night when he reached Great Rock. He was always thankful that it was in the dark that he heard the words at her door, "Miss Annie? Miss Annie is dead. She was buried a week ago."

There was a blank space after that which Dick never tried to fill. All he knew was that he pulled his courage together and took to the road, Swiss bag on his back. He seemed to have no friend now but the road, and more than once he caught himself announcing to the long winding highways he followed eastward, "You're all I have."

He was in the hills that roll up from the Ohio in long, smooth billows, forming lovely, varied valleys for the great streams that feed the mighty river, and mounting always higher as you go toward the rising sun, until finally they are mountains. A fine, old post road from the East, one that had been fought over by French and Indians and British and trod by Washington, was Dick's main route. He knew it well, for as a boy he had more than once walked it with his guardian. Moreover, it was by that road that half of Great Rock, his own family included, had made their pioneer trip into what was then the West.

He often spent his night in an old inn, a relic of those days, with thick walls, splendid woodwork and great rooms, but low and narrow doors, built at a time when it was not wise to have too generous entrances or too many windows.

Now and then he found one of the old places transformed into a modern road-house, for the automobile was creating a demand for a kind of accommodation the country had not needed since the passing of the stage coach. Often he struck off the highway and made detours over wooded hills and along little traveled roads. It was in returning from one of these excursions that, late one September afternoon, he discovered Sabinsport.

He had been quite lost all day and walking hard. As he came across a valley and mounted a long winding hill, he saw by the growing thickness of the settlement that he was approaching a town. He came upon it suddenly as he went over the brow of the hill. It lay to right and left, stretching down and over two natural terraces to a river which formed here a great half-moon. The whole beautiful, crystal curve was visible from where Dick stood in charmed surprise. The town that filled the mounting semicircle, in spite of its wealth of trees, could be roughly traced. On the high slope which ran gently down from where he stood were scores of comfortable houses of well-to-do folk, all of them with generous lawns. They ran the American architectural gamut, Dick guessed, for he could see from where he stood a big, square brick with ancient white pillars, the front of a dark-brown, Washington Irving Gothic, and the highly ornamental cupola which he knew meant the fashionable style of the sixties. He was quite sure, if he looked, he would find the whole succession. "There's a *nouveau* art concealed somewhere," he thought to himself, and later he found he was right.

The big houses became smaller as the slope descended, giving way for what Dick guessed was a red-brick business section. "It was once a port," he said to himself. "The Ohio boats came up here, I wager."

From the south and opposite bank of the stream rose a steep bluff perhaps two hundred feet high. Rows of unpainted houses ran along the river bank and were scattered in a more or less haphazard way over the face of the bluff; their ugliness softened by trees which grew in abundance on the steep slopes. The most striking feature of the picture was a great iron mill to the left. It filled acres of land along the south river bank, its huge black stacks, from which smoke streamed straight to the east, rose formal and imperative. They were amazingly decorative in the soft, late September day, against the green of the south bluff, and curiously dominating. "We are the strong things here," they said to him,—“the things to be reckoned with.”

As Dick walked down the long hill looking for a hotel, he felt more of his old joy in discovery, more of his old zestful curiosity than in many a day. The beauty of the place, the strong note of distinction the mills made in the picture, had finally stirred him. His interest was further aroused when he walked straight up to the quaint front of the Hotel Paradise. It was like things he had seen years before in the South; a long, brick building with steep roof and tiny gables fronted by narrow verandas with slender, girlish, iron pillars. The arched door was perfect in its proportions, and the big stone hall was cool and inviting. But once inside, Dick suddenly realized that somebody had had the sense, while preserving all the quaintness of a building of at least a hundred years before, so to fashion and enlarge it as to make a thoroughly comfortable, modern hotel. His curiosity was piqued, though it happened to be years before he learned how the Paradise had been preserved.

The night brought Dick rest, but the morning found his flare of interest dead. He made his pack with a dull need of moving on, and he would have done so if,

when he came into the office, he had not found there a group of white-faced, horrified men. He caught the words, "On fire." "One hundred and fifty men shut in." "No hope." A word of inquiry and he learned that at a near-by coal mine, they spoke of as the "Emma," there had been a terrible disaster. He learned too that help of all sorts was being hurried to the place by the "spur," which, as he rightly guessed, was the road connecting the mine with the main line of the railroad which he had traced the night before along the south bank of the river.

Dick drank a cup of coffee and followed a hurrying crowd to where an engine and two coal cars rapidly filling with all the articles of relief that on the instant could be gathered, were just ready to leave. Quickly sensing the leader, a young man of not over twenty-five, Dick said, "I'm a stranger, but I might be useful. I understand something of relief work. I speak languages. I would be glad to go."

The man gave him an appraising look. "Jump in," he said curtly. A moment later they were off.

The coal road ran from the river to the top of the bluff by a steep and perilous grade. It came out on the plateau at least three miles from the mines, but a mile and a half away they first saw the point of the steel tippie of the power house over the main shaft. It all looked peaceful enough to the straining eyes of the men on the flat car. It was not until they were within a quarter of a mile of the place itself that they caught the outline of the crowd that had gathered. Dick's first thought was, "How quiet they are!" They were quiet, and there was not a sound as the men bounded from the car and raced through to the shaft itself. There a dreadful sight met their eyes. A dozen men were being lifted from a cage that had

just come up. It took but a glance to see that they were dead or dying.

It was days later before Dick learned what had really happened. Like so many ghastly mine accidents, the fire, for they found out it was fire which was ravaging the mine, had come from a trivial cause, so trivial that the miners themselves who were within reach and might easily have put out the first flame had not taken the trouble. An open torch had come in contact with a bit of oily rag. It had fallen, setting fire to the refuse on a passing car. To that no one paid attention, for over it were bundles of pressed hay; and the tradition in the mine is that pressed hay will not burn.

The whole thing was ablaze before the men had realized what was happening. There was no water on that level, and they had been ordered to run the car into the escape shaft and dump it to the bottom, and there to turn on the hose. So great was the smoke and heat from the blazing stuff that the men below, who had promptly enough attacked it, were driven back. The shaft was timbered, and before they knew it the timbers were blazing. The smoke spread through the levels. A thing, so easy to stop at the beginning, was now taking appalling proportions. Men who had passed by the flames on their way to the 1:30 cage and had not even stopped to lend a hand to put it out, so little had they thought it necessary, felt the smoke before they reached the top. The men below on the second and third levels began to run hither and yon, trying to notify the diggers in the side shafts. A man more intelligent than the others urged that the fan be stopped. It was done, but it was too late. The fire was master.

A second load of men, the last to escape, had given the people at the top a sense of the disaster. The

mine manager had called for volunteers. There had not been a minute's hesitation. Men crowded into the cage, not all miners. Among them was a little-thought-of chap, an Italian street vender. Another, the driver, who moved everybody who came and went to the mines. They had gone down without hesitation. Halfway down the smoke began to overpower them, but they went on. The probability is that they were unconscious before they reached the bottom, for only a feeble signal was given, and the engineer, not understanding, did not respond. It was only when signals did not come, and the now thoroughly frightened crowd had pleaded and then threatened the engineer that he had brought up the cage. And now they were taking them out — twelve dead men.

It was four days later when, through the combined efforts of both state and federal mine experts, a picked body of men fitted out with the most approved life-saving apparatus made their first trip into the burning mine. The hours of waiting, Dick remembered as long as he lived. The whole mining village, a motley collection of nationalities now fused into one, stood around the shaft for four hours before the first signal was given, a peremptory call to raise the cage. As it came up and the few that were allowed at the shaft saw who were in it, such a shout of exultant joy as Dick had never heard came from them, "They are alive!" "They are alive!" And certainly here were men, believed to be dead, alive, twelve of them, their pallor and wanness showing through their blackened faces, too weak to walk; yet almost unaided, they tottered out, and one after another dropped into the arms of women and children who sobbed and shouted over them.

The news quickly spread, twenty men, who had walled themselves up had been found alive after four

days of waiting. They believed they would get them all out alive. The cage descended and shortly after the signal was given to raise, and eight more came up alive. Such a tremendous burst of hope and joy as it is rarely given men to see spread through the stricken crowd. If twenty were alive, might it not be that the other hundred were? But it was not to be! The draft had aroused the smoldering flames, and when the cage attempted again to descend sharp signals were soon given. This time it was only the rescue party that came up, and they were in various stages of collapse. The cry went out, "She has broken out!" "She has broken out!" The reaction on the stricken crowd, after its hours of hope and joy, was prostrating. Men and women sobbed aloud. They knew too well that the reviving fire meant that there was nothing to do but to seal the main shaft. No other way to smother the fire. White-faced, heavy-hearted men did the work; and it was not until ten days later that the experts on the ground pronounced it safe to open the mine.

Through this long fortnight of agony and waiting, Dick stayed in the settlement. From the time that he had bounded from the flat car with the relief party there had never been a moment that he had not been busy. The fact that he knew a little of everybody's language, enough to make himself understood at least; the fact that he understood their customs, had made many of the miners open their hearts to him in a way which otherwise would have been impossible. Dick had that wonderful thing, the ability to be at home with people of any sort or of any nation. He seemed at once to the miners to be one of them in a way that not even those in authority whom they had known longest could be.

But it was not only to the people that he had made

himself a helpful friend. In a hundred ways he had instinctively and unconsciously worked with Jack Mulligan, the stern young man who had bid him to jump on the flat car the morning that they had started from Sabinsport. Jack, he had found, was the son of the man who had opened the mines, a man known as "Jake," and, as Dick was to discover, a man notorious, but beloved.

Mining had been in the blood of Jack Mulligan. If he had had his way he would have taken a pick at sixteen, and worked his way up. His mother, long dead, had extracted a promise from her devoted but riotous husband that Jack should have the best education the country would afford, if he would take it. And because it was his mother's wish, he had taken it; but he had turned it into the way of his own tastes. He had thrown himself heartily into the work of the great technological institute to which he had been sent. He had taken all of the special training as a mining engineer that the country afforded, and he had studied the best work of foreign mines. When he had come back at twenty-four to his own home, it was the understanding that he was to be employed as a general manager, not in any way to supplant the educated but tried men that had grown up under his father, but, as he planned it, to modernize the mine.

Jack's heart was set on making the mines safe. No serious accident had ever happened in them and to his father's mind that was proof enough that no serious accident would ever happen, and the plans for lighting, supporting and airing that Jack brought back he treated first with contempt, then with a sort of fatherly tolerance, only yielding inch by inch as he saw how much this boy, whom he adored and in whom his pride was so great, had them at heart. Jack had finally brought his father to consent to electrify the mines completely.

The whole equipment had been ordered. In a few months at least it would be in place, and now this fearful thing had happened. No wonder that day after day as he went about white and silent among the people, his heart was bitter, not against his father, but against the horrible set of circumstances that had led to the thing he had always feared and which he believed that he was going to prevent. Dick little by little got the story, and his sympathy with the boy was hardly more than he felt for the rugged, old man, who, like Jack, never left the mining settlement, but followed his son about in a beaten, dogged silent way which at times brought tears to Dick's eyes.

The horror of the disaster brought scores of people to Sabinsport, and every day they filled the little settlement. There were the Union organizers; there was a score or more of reporters; there were investigators of all degrees of intelligence and hysteria. Among these Ralph circulated. He had bought the *Argus* but a few months before the disaster. His very lack of personal acquaintance with the stockholders, officers or active managers of the mine left him without any of the moderating personal feeling which a man who had long known the town might have had. Ralph saw just one thing, that the two leading stockholders in the "Emma," the men who had always run it, were the two most unscrupulous and adroit politicians in that part of the world — the two that he had set out from the start to "get." He felt that in the mine disaster he had, as he said, "the goods." They, particularly Jake, were responsible for this awful thing. And never a day that he did not in the *Argus* publish wrathful and indignant articles, trying to arouse the community. He received no protest from his victims. Jake was so overwhelmed by the disaster itself, so absorbed in what he knew his son was going through, that

the *Argus* was hardly a pin prick to him. It was Dick that discovered how hard it was for the old man. In that hundred men who never came back alive there had been a full score that had grown up with him, that had stood by always in the development of the "Emma." They were the trusted men, the permanent, responsible men, who, if they had not made money, were still in Jake's opinion his greatest asset. And then they were his friends. With these burdens on his heart, why should he mind a little thing like the *Argus*?

Almost immediately after the disaster, Dick found that the place was swarming with claim agents, some of whom he instinctively felt were untrustworthy. Familiar as he was with the whole theory of accident compensation, he immediately informed himself about the laws of the State. They were practically null. It was then that he went to Ralph and laid before him the possibility of using this disaster as a means of securing in the State a fair compensation law. And he said to him very frankly, "I believe that if the Union leaders here, the better class of investigators, you yourself, would but put this thing before the officers of this mine, that they would take the lead and voluntarily accept a liberal system of compensation. If they would do this, it probably would clinch the campaign for a state compensation law."

It was a wise suggestion. Ralph, who had been spending his force in violent and personal attack, immediately began to work on something like a program. In the meantime Dick, who by this time had won the entire confidence of Jack, opened the matter. It needed no argument. He lost no time in putting it before his father, who at the moment was ready to agree to anything that the boy wanted.

The various interests of the mine were called together with expert labor men and others who were in-

formed and influential. It did not go through without a fight. There were stockholders in Sabinsport and elsewhere who, hearing of the liberal plans that were being discussed, wrote anonymous notes, protesting against the diversion of the stockholders' dividends in sentimental and Utopian plans. Reuben Cowder stood steadfastly against the scheme. To him it was utterly impractical, an un-heard-of thing. While the matter was being discussed, Ralph hammered daily, wisely and unwisely. It touched Dick to the heart that Jack never but once spoke of this, and that was one day when he said, "He is right in the main, but it would be easier for me if he would be a little less bitter against Cowder and my father." In the end the whole generous plan was adopted. It came about by Reuben Cowder's sudden withdrawal of opposition. It was years before Dick learned the reason of this unexplained and unexpected change of front.

It was not until the struggle over compensation was ended that Dick suddenly remembered that he was only a wayfarer in Sabinsport, a traveler delayed en route. With the remembrance came the realization of what these people had come to mean to him, that he was actually more interested in this community than in any other spot on earth. Unconsciously he seemed to have grown into the town, to belong to it.

In the end it came about naturally enough that he should stay on. A little church in the town had lost by death a clergyman, twenty years in its service. The little band of communicants were fastidious and conservative. In the disaster which had for a time swept down all the barriers in the community they had become deeply interested in Dick. His hallmarks were so much finer than any they had ever dreamed possible to secure for their church, that it was with some trepidation that they suggested that he stay on with them.

They were even willing to wink at what their richest member, a grumbling stockholder in the Emma mine, called his "revolutionary notions."

The Bishop was willing to wink at them too. "They need you, boy," he had told him, "even more than they want you. They are in a fair way to die of respectability. You can perhaps resurrect them; but don't try to do it by shock treatment. You have the advantage of not being an applicant."

And, consenting only for an accommodation, Dick accepted, and remained. He soon came to call Sabinsport home. Moreover, he was happy. He realized in his leisure moments, of which he had few enough, that he was happy without several things that he had supposed essential to happiness — without a home, a wife, a child, companions of similar training and outlook to his own.

The town interested him profoundly. It was his first close contact with an old American town which had undergone industrial treatment. He felt its cosmopolitan character, something of which the inhabitants themselves were quite unconscious. As a matter of fact, all sorts of people were blending in Sabinsport. A thin pioneer stream of Scotch, Irish and English had settled the original lands, and early in the nineteenth century had selected as their trading post the point on the river which had afterwards become Sabinsport.

The port had prospered amazingly in those first days. After forty years and more it looked as if it were destined to be the metropolis of that part of the world. Then the first railroad came across country, and it left Sabinsport out. A smaller, poorer rival, some twenty-five miles away, secured the prize. Slowly but surely the trade that had so long put into Sabinsport changed its course to what only too soon they began to call the City. Fewer and fewer boats came up the

river, fewer and fewer coaches and laden wagons came from the up-country. The town submitted with poor grace to its inevitable decline. To this day Dick found that the older families particularly were jealous of the city and resented its unconscious patronage. It had become the habit in Sabinsport to sneer at the city as vulgar, pushing and brutal, though these feelings did not prevent her from patronizing its shops and amusements.

This early disappointment had not by any means prevented the steady growth of the town. Coal had been discovered, adding a second layer of the rich to Sabinsport. The coal had brought the railroad and factories, but it was still those early settlers who had first come into the town and built the splendid old houses, with their spacious grounds, that considered themselves the aristocracy. It was an aristocracy a little insistent with newcomers on its superiority, a little scornful of its successors. It considered itself the backbone of Sabinsport, which was natural; and it was quite unconscious that the facts were every day disputing its pretensions.

Slowly and inevitably Sabinsport had been and was digesting successive waves of peoples. When the mines first opened there had been an incoming of Welsh. Only a few of them were left in the mines now. They had saved their money and had come into the town. Their children had learned trades, indeed there was a corner of the high land known as Welsh Hill; a place where one found reliable workmen of all sorts, and a place too which was famous for its music; indeed, Welsh Hill sent a famous chorus every year to the annual musical festival in the City. On Christmas morning they still promenaded the streets, waking people out of their sleep with their Christmas carols.

The Germans had come into the mines soon after

the Welsh. They too had been thrifty — bought property. There were several of them that were counted among the best citizens; among them was a man, Rupert Littman, who once had milked his father's cows and raked his hay and now was president of one of the richest banks, a stockholder in every enterprise. They had been much more thoroughly absorbed into the social and business life than any other people, and much that was good in Sabinsport was due to them.

As the years had gone on, as more mines had been opened, and as mills had been built, a motley of people had come: Austrians, Serbs, Russians, Greeks, Italians, and now and then an Armenian. With all of these Dick felt himself very much at home. They seemed familiar to him, more familiar, he sometimes thought, than the smiling, busy, competent Americans of his church. There was a small group of Serbians at the mines with whom he had been especially intimate in the years of the Balkan War. More than one had left the mines to go back to Serbia to fight. They had been most exultant with the outcome of the war. The most intelligent of this group was Nikola Petrovitch, a thoughtful fellow of thirty-five or forty, an ardent Pan-Slavist. It was only because of an injury he had sustained in the mine at the time of the great disaster that he had not gone out in 1912. He had followed with Dick every step of the war, chafing bitterly that it was impossible for him to be in the fight. When at the end of June, 1914, the news of the murder of the Grand Duke had come, Nikola had been terribly cast down. "If our people did it," he said, "it was a mistake." Every line of news from that day he had discussed with Dick. He had believed from the first that Austria intended now to use all her power to crush Serbia; and "Germany will help her," he used to say. The practical acceptance of Austria's ultimatum had

given Dick hope in the situation. It did not seem possible to him that any country, however autocratic and greedy, could push demand beyond the point which the Serbians had accepted.

Dick had other friends. There was the Greek, John A. Papalagos, as the sign on his flourishing fruit and vegetable store had it. People smiled at the time they knew that the Parson spent with the fruit seller. What they did not realize was that this man with his queer name was probably as well read as any man of the town, certainly far better read in European affairs than any of the leading citizens of Sabinsport. His ambition was a Greek republic, and every move on the European political checker-board he watched with excited and intelligent interest, calculating how it was going to deter or forward the one ardent passion of his life.

As a matter of fact it was only with Papalagos and the Serbians on the hill that Dick was able to carry on any really intelligent exchange of views on European politics. Ralph, who ought to have been, he felt, his comrade in these matters, had practically no interest in them. This indifference always puzzled and dismayed Dick. European politics, in Ralph's opinion, were as unrelated to the United States as the politics of Mars. One feature only he treated with interest, and that was Germany's social work. The forms of social insurance she had devised interested him keenly. He had regularly written enthusiastic editorials on the way she met the breaking down of men through age, illness, accident. Her handling of employment was one of his stock subjects. Germany was socially efficient in his mind, preserving men power, "as well as machines and hogs," as he put it in the phrase of his school. He pictured her as a land where every man and woman was well housed, continuously employed,

cared for in sickness or in health, and that was all Ralph knew about Germany. When Dick, who had tramped the land from end to end, put in a protest and mentioned the army as the end of all this care of human beings, Ralph broke out in a violent defense of the military system. It was merely a way of training men physically and arousing in them social solidarity. A nation couldn't do what Germany did for men and women unless she loved them. It was what the United States needed.

Outside of these devices for meeting the breaking down of human beings, Ralph took no interest in Europe. His attitude through the Balkan War had baffled Dick by its perfunctoriness. He published the news as it came to him daily. He kept the maps on his walls, and now and then he wrote a few correct paragraphs, noting the change in situation. He was pleased that the power of Turkey was limited at the end, for he did have a hazy notion of the undesirableness of Turkey in Europe, but beyond this there was neither feeling nor understanding.

How, Dick asked himself, could a man of Ralph's ability spend four years in a first-class American college and two on a great newspaper and still be so completely cut off from the affairs of the globe outside of the United States? It was a fact, but Dick could not understand how it could be a fact. It gave him his first real sense of the newness of the country, its entire absorption in itself.

Ralph defended this indifference. "They're nothing to us," he declared. "We're too busy taking care of their scrap heaps. A million a year coming here to be reconstructed and Americanized, why should we bother about what Europe thinks or does? We're too busy. They can't touch us."

As Dick walked out to the "Emma" that night after

supper, he felt keenly his isolation. His mind was full of dread. Europe and her affairs had long been like a chess-board to him. For years with his fellows at Oxford, with *Times* correspondents in different continental cities, with a host of scattered acquaintances of various points of view, he had played the fascinating game of speculation and forecast that traps every student of history and politics who in the last forty years has spent any length of time in any great continental center. Dick knew something of the ambitions of every nation in Europe, something of their temper and their antipathies. He had in mind all possible line-ups. He knew as well as any European statesman that if Austria declared war on Serbia, there would probably be Russian interference, and if Russia went in — “My God,” he groaned to himself, “*Der Tag* is here at last. It’s the ‘*nacheste Krieg*.’”

He tried hard, as he walked, to push away the depression which was overwhelming him. “Of course, they’ll stop it,” he told himself; “they have before. It is folly for me to let this thing get hold of me in this way.”

It was twilight when he crossed the fields to the mining settlement and made for the house of his friend Nikola Petrovitch. In the dim light the little house looked very pleasant. Stana Petrovitch loved her garden, and the severe outlines of the company house were softened with blossoming honeysuckle, which filled the air with a faint perfume. It was very sweet to see, but before Dick was near enough to get more than a pleasant outline, from the house there came a burst of strong, fierce song — a dozen voices, eloquent with emotion. How well he knew it! The Serbian National Anthem:

"God of Justice! Thou Who saved us
When in deepest bondage cast,
Hear Thy Serbian children's voices,
Be our help as in the past.
With Thy mighty hand sustain us,
Still our rugged pathway trace;
God, our Hope! protect and cherish
Serbian crown and Serbian race!

"On our sepulcher of ages
Breaks the resurrection morn,
From the slough of direst slavery
Serbia anew is born.
Through five hundred years of durance
We have knelt before Thy face,
All our kin, O God! deliver!
Thus entreats the Serbian race. Amen."

It was what he knew. Nikola, Yovan, Marta. They were *going*.

"God help the women," he said to himself. Turning, he went around and to the street. It was the end of a shift, and the men who had come out had washed, eaten and now were smoking their pipes in groups at one or another door. The women were collected too. There was excitement in the air.

"Mr. Dick," some one called to him. "Is it true, the war?"

"I am afraid so," he said.

"And what are they jumping on poor little Serbia for, a big one like Austria? That's your kings for you."

It was one of his Irish friends speaking.

"But they'll fight, them Serbians; they're scrappers all right. Nikola is going in the morning. Marta too. It is good to live in a country where they don't have wars."

"Nikola's foolish to go," broke in some one. "I

told his woman so, and she flared up and said, 'He no go, I go! Serbian men fight — not 'fraid.' I guess she's right. I don't see what she is going to do, five kids too."

Dick walked on. One of the foremen dropped out of the group that sat on the porch.

"May I speak with you, Mr. Dick?" he said. "A man came to-night, Serbian. He was here when Nikola and Marta came up, and went home with them. Nikola was just here. He told me Serbia was going to war, and that he and Marta and Yovan were leaving in the morning. What's the row? Is there a war?"

Dick told him all he knew. The foreman's brief comment was, "Must be some country that will take a man like Nikola out of a job like his — family too."

"It is," said Dick.

Back at home he called up Ralph. "Better be sure that some one is at the 10:30 to-morrow morning, Sam. Nikola is leaving. Marta and Yovan too."

"Leaving," said Ralph. "Why, they're the best men in the 'Emma.' You don't mean they're fools enough to rush out without knowing whether there's going to be a war. It will be over before they get there. Stop 'em, Dick. It is nonsense."

"There'll be a war when they get there, all right, Ralph, and no man could hold Nikola now. Make a note of their going, won't you?"

"Sure, if you want it."

If you will examine the personal column of the Sabinsport *Argus* for July 29, 1914, you will find among other items, this:

"Nikola Petrovitch, Yovan Markovitch, and Marta Popovitch, all of the 'Emma' mine, left at 10:30 this morning for New York. They expect to

sail at once for Serbia, where they will join the army which has been called into the field by Austria's declaration of war. Hope to see you back soon, boys."

And thus it was that the Great War first came to Sabinsport.

CHAPTER II

A RIPPLE of interest ran over a few quarters of Sabinsport when it read of the sudden departure of three Serbian miners. At the banks, and in the offices of the mills and factories, men sniffed or swore, "Doesn't a man know when he is well off? I don't understand how a steady fellow like Nikola Petrovitch can do such a crazy thing. Who is going to take care of his family?" This was the usual business view.

A few members of the Ladies' Aid of Dick's church grumbled to him. "We will have that family on our hands again. Couldn't you stop him?"

It was momentary interest only. Austria's declaration of war had not entered their minds. Dick felt that if he had asked some of the members of his congregation who had declared war, they might have said, "Serbia." The repeated shocks of the news of the next few days battered down indifference. Each night and each morning there fell into the community facts — terrible, unbelievable — stunning and horrifying it. Germany had invaded Belgium. She was battering down Liége. Why, what did it mean? England had declared war on Germany. She was calling out an army, but what for? And we — we were to be neutral, of course. We had nothing to do with it.

The town discussed the news of that dreadful week in troubled voices, reading the paper line by line, curious, awed — but quite detached. The first sense of connection came when the *Argus* announced that Patsy McCullon was lost. The last her family had heard of her she was in Belgium. They had cabled — could get no word. Now Patsy was Sabinsport's pride.

She was an example, so High Town said, of what a girl could make of herself, though as a matter of fact better backing than Patsy had for her achievement it would be hard to find. Her father and mother were of the reliable Scotch stock which had come a hundred years before to the country near Sabinsport. Here Patsy's grandfather had settled and prospered. Here her father had been born and here he still carried on the original McCullon farm. He had married a "native" like himself, and like himself well-to-do. They had worked hard and they had to show for their efforts as comfortable and attractive a place as the district boasted — not a "show farm," like Ralph Cowder's, but clean, generous acres — many of them — substantial buildings always shining with fresh paint, herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, gardens, vines, orchards.

The McCullons had one child, Patsy. You'd go far to find anything firmer on its feet than Patsy McCullon, anything that knew better its own mind or went more promptly and directly after the thing it wanted. Patsy was twenty-four. Since the hour she was born, she had been her own mistress. When she was ten she had elected to go into town to school. When she was sixteen she had graduated, and the next year she had gone to college. Her father and mother had put in a feeble protest. They needed her. She was an only child. They had "enough." Why not settle down? But Patsy said firmly, No. She was going to "prepare to do something." When they asked her what, she said quite frankly she didn't know. She'd see. She knew the first thing was education and she meant to have it. She'd teach and pay back if they said so, but Father McCullon hastened to say that it "wasn't necessary." He guessed she could have what she wanted. And so Patsy had gone East to college. She had graduated with honor two years before the

war and had come back to Sabinsport to take a position in the high school.

If Patsy had been able to analyze the motives back of her career to date she would have found the dominating one to have been a determination to make Sabinsport — select, rich, satisfied Sabinsport — take her in. She had been, as a little girl, conscious that these handsome, well-dressed, citified people, whose origin was in no case better and often not so good as her own — Father McCullon took care that Patsy knew the worst of the forebears of those in town who held their heads so high — regarded her as a little country girl, something intangibly different and inferior to themselves. When they stopped at the farm, as they so often did in pleasant weather to eat strawberries in summer and apples in the fall, to drink buttermilk and gather “country posies,” as they called them, she had been vaguely offended by their ways.

When she insisted at ten upon going into town to school, it was with an unconscious resolve to find out what made them “different” — what secret had they for making her father and mother so proud of their visits, and why didn’t her father and mother drop in as they did? She suggested it once when they were in town, and had been told, “No, you can’t do that. We’ve not been asked.”

“But they come to visit you without being asked.”

“But that’s different. We are country people. Visitors are always welcome in the country. City people don’t expect you to come without invitation.”

This offended her. She would find out about it. But it continued to baffle her.

She stood high in school. She quickly learned how to dress and do her hair as well as the best of them. She read books, she shone in every school exhibition, but she continued a girl from the country. Evidently

she must do more than come to them; she must bring them something. She'd see what college would do.

College did wonders for Patsy. She came to it full of health and zest, excellently prepared; good, oh very good, to look at; sufficiently supplied with money, and, greatest of all, determined to get everything going. "Nothing gets away from Patsy McCullon," the envious sometimes said. It didn't, nothing tried to: she was too useful, too agreeable, too resourceful. It didn't matter whether it was a Greek or a tennis score, Patsy went after it, and oftener than not carried it away. Probably if there had been annual voting for the most popular girl in her class, there would never have been a year she wouldn't have won. She had friends galore. All her short vacations she went on visits — the homes of distinguished people, it would have been noted, if anybody had been keeping tab on her. And Sabinsport always knew it.

"Miss Patsy McCullon, the daughter of Donald McCullon, is spending her Easter holiday in New York, with the daughter of Senator Blank," the *Argus* reported. A thing like that didn't get by the exclusive of Sabinsport. There weren't many of them who would not have been willing to have given fat slices of their generous incomes for introduction into that fashionable household.

And when college was done with and High Town was prepared to welcome Patsy into its innermost, idlest set, she had taken its breath away and distressed her father and mother by asking for and getting a position in the high school.

Her reasons for this surprising action were many. She could not and would not ask more from her parents. They had been generous, too generous, and she'd taken freely. It wasn't fair, unless she went back to the farm and she wouldn't do that. She could be near

them if not with them, and still be where she could conquer High Town.

But Patsy soon learned — indeed she was pretty sure of it before she put her ambition to test — that the thing she had set out to win so long ago wasn't the thing she wanted. She found herself free to come and go wherever she would in Sabinsport, but it was no longer an interest. College had done something to Patsy — set her on a chase after what she called the "real." She didn't know what it was, but she did know it was something to be worked for — which is perhaps more than most of the seekers of reality ever discover.

She was going to achieve the "real" and she was never going to be a snob. She wasn't ever going to make anybody feel as those people in Sabinsport, with their suburban, metropolitan airs, had made her feel. She was going to treat everybody fair, for, as she sagely told herself, "You can never tell what anybody may do — look at me!" Which of course proves that Patsy was not free from calculation. Indeed, she steered her course solely by calculation, but it was calculation without malice, incapable of a meanness, a lie or a real unkindness.

"She's out after what she wants," a brother of one of her college friends had said once, "but you can be darn sure she'll never double cross you in getting it: she's white all through." She was, but she was also hard; a kind, clean, just sort of hardness — of which she was entirely unconscious.

Patsy's two years in the high school had won her the town solidly. And when in June, 1914, she went abroad everybody had been interested. It was her first trip and she had prepared for it thoroughly, drawing particularly on Dick's stores of experience.

Ralph, who was feeling very wroth at her that spring

because of her indifference to his reform plans, sniffed at this. "I don't see why you give Patsy so much time over this trip of hers. It will only make her more unendurable, more cocksure, more blind to things about her. I like a woman that sees."

"Sees what?" asked Dick.

"The condition of those about her — the future. Patsy McCullon doesn't know there is a suffering woman or child in Sabinsport. She has never crossed the threshold of a factory or entered a mine."

"She's no exception," said Dick. "There are not a half dozen of the women in Sabinsport, even those whose entire income comes from factory and mine, that know anything of the life of the men and women who do the work. You can't blame Patsy for what is true of nearly all American well-to-do women. Of course it is shocking. But Patsy at least has the excuse that she gets no dividends from these institutions and so has no direct responsibility."

"I'll give her credit for knowing what she wants," said Ralph, dryly.

"And playing a clean game, Ralph."

"Yes, I suppose so, but I hate a calculating woman."

Dick eyed him sharply. He had a suspicion sometimes that Ralph's irritation over Patsy was partly growing fondness and partly self-protection. He feared her closing in on him, and feared he would be helpless if she did.

"She'll have to work harder than she ever did before, but if I don't mistake, she's beginning. I don't believe she knows it, though," Dick said to himself.

Patsy sailed in June. He and Ralph had had several joyous notes from her, and the day after the declaration of war on Serbia a long letter announcing a sudden change of the itinerary she and Dick had arranged with such pains.

"I have run into a college mate here who with her husband and brother are just starting for a leisurely motor trip, half pleasure, half business. Mr. Laurence and his brother have connections over here, and it is to look into them that they go the route they do. Of course, Dick, it shatters all those wonderful Baedeker constellations we worked out for this part of the world, but I shall see the true French country and the little towns and I'll learn how the people live and I'll have no end of knowledge about 'conditions' to give Ralph when I get back."

"Much she'll see there if she can't see anything here," growled Ralph. "Who is this Laurence anyway?"

"We leave Paris around the 20th for Dijon. Mr. Laurence's firm makes all sorts of things for farmers. They have offices in Paris and Brussels and Berlin — all the big cities, and agents in many of the larger towns. I suppose he takes these trips to see what the country people need and how well the agents are persuading them they need it. Martha says it's no end of fun to go with him. We'll spend a day in Dijon — time enough to see the old houses and the pastels in the museum. We're going from there to a place called Beaune — never heard of it before, but Henry — Mr. Laurence's brother — he knows everything about this country — says it has the most perfect fifteenth century hospital in Europe. Then along the Meuse into Belgium. We ought to be in Brussels by the first of August."

And so on and on — a gurgling, happy, altogether care-free letter, calculated above all to make a young man who still was unconscious that he was in danger,

read it and re-read it and say to himself that a girl who could write like that at twenty-four must be a very giddy person, and then to wake up in the night with an entirely irrelevant thought—"She didn't say whether Henry is married. Confound him."

If Patsy had calculated her effect—which she had not, for she herself was unconscious of why she wrote these bubbling letters so unlike her usual ones, she could not have done better.

"I wonder where Patsy is to-day," said Dick to himself. "I hope they turned back," but he said nothing to Ralph of his disquiet. It took that young man forty-eight hours longer to realize that Patsy might be caught in some unpleasant trap. He called up Dick. "The papers say there's a panic among our tourists, Dick. Do you suppose that hits Patsy? Don't you think we better drive out and see if the old folks have heard from her?"

It was Sunday afternoon of August 2nd that they went out. Mr. and Mrs. McCullon were quite serene. "Here's a letter from Patsy," they said. "Last we've heard." It was from Paris, the 20th, two days later than theirs, the night before they started. "She ought to be in Brussels to-day. They say they're worried over there about getting home. I guess Patsy can take care of herself all right. Glad she's with some real live American business men—these Laurences seem to have pretty big foreign interests. Patsy's all right with them."

"Of course she is," agreed Ralph. "Besides, Belgium's a good place to be now. Belgium has a treaty with all her neighbors to keep off her soil. France and Germany keep a strip specially for fighting purposes. Couldn't be a better place for Patsy." And Ralph quite honestly believed it.

But it was a different thing to Dick. He was op-

pressed, bewildered, alarmed. He couldn't have told just what he feared. The world seemed suddenly black and all roads closed. But at least he would keep his depression to himself. He knew how entirely unreasonable it would seem to all Sabinsport.

It was the invasion of Belgium — the thing that could not be, the resistance of the Belgians, the attack upon Liège, the realization that the Germans intended to fight their way to Paris — that they must pass through Brussels where Patsy was supposed to be, that gave Sabinsport its first sense that the war might concern them. The anxiety of Farmer and Mrs. McCullon, which grew with the reading of the papers, stirred the town mightily. The poor old people, so confident at first, had become more and more disturbed as they failed by cablegram to get any news. They spent part of every day in town, going back at night, white with weariness and forebodings. The only thing that buoyed them up was the series of postals they received in these early August days. Patsy had been at Dijon and eaten of its wonderful pastry. She had been at Beaune and seen the fireplace big enough to roast an ox in — they were starting for a run through the fortified towns — Belfort, Verdun, Metz, Maubeuge — and then to Brussels via Dinant and Namur. Dreadful days of silence followed.

It was not until the 14th of August that Mr. McCullon received word that Patsy had arrived that day in Brussels, was well and was posting a letter. The next morning a wire from Washington said that the Embassy reported her in Brussels, and when the New York papers came late in the afternoon, there was her name in the State Department's list of "Americans Found."

It was wonderful how the news ran up and down the town. Willie Butler rushed into the house crying at

the full of his lungs, "Miss Patsy's found. Miss Patsy's found." Willie had been a year in the high school, and his admiration for his teacher, always considerable, had been heated white-hot by the excitement of her adventures. They talked about it in the barber shop and at the grocery and at the hardware store where Farmer McCullon traded and where he had been seen so often in the last terrible days, seeking from those whom long acquaintance had made familiar the support that familiarity and friendliness carry.

It was a topic for half the tea tables in Sabinsport that night, and many people whom Mr. and Mrs. McCullon scarcely knew called them up to tell them how glad they were Patsy was safe and sometimes to confide their dark suspicion that the reason there had been no news of her was that she was a prisoner of war!

In the long twelve days the McCullons and Sabinsport waited for Patsy's letter, regular cablegrams notified them of her safety. Then the letter came. Simple as it was, it took on something of the character of a historical document in the town. It made the things they had read and shivered over every morning actual and in a vague way connected them with the events. There was no little pride, too, among Patsy's friends in town that they should know an eye-witness of what they had begun to realize was the beginning of no ordinary war.

Patsy's letter was headed

"DINANT, BELGIUM, Friday, July 31, 1918."

"Only three weeks ago," Dick said to himself, shuddering, when the letter came to him, "and what is going on in Dinant to-day?" for, knowing the land foot by foot, he realized how inevitable it was that the

town must be engulfed in the Namur-Charleroi battle, the result of which in the light of the three weeks since Patsy had written her heading, he had no doubt.

“ My dear Folks: — It is just ten days since I mailed you a letter. That was in Paris. We were starting out. It was all so gay then. The world has changed. It is all so anxious now. It is not for any tangible reason — nothing I could tell you. I suppose what has happened to me is that I have caught what is in the air. It is like an infection — this stern, tense expectancy that pervades France. To-day we reached Dinant, this lovely little playboy of a town, its feet in the Meuse, its head wearing an old old citadel on a cliff grown up with trees and ferns. You would love it so, Mother McCullon. And here it is the same watchful, dangerous quiet. There have been rumors of war for many days, you know. The French papers, which I've read diligently, were full of forecastings and queer political calculations which I didn't understand and which Mr. Laurence said were not to be taken seriously. It didn't seem credible to me that because a crazy fellow in a little under-sized country like Serbia had killed even a Grand Duke that a great country like Austria should declare war on her, particularly when she's eaten as much humble pie as Serbia has. And even if she did, I cannot see for the life of me what Russia has to do with it or why France should be alarmed.

“ I only know that it seems as if the very air held its breath, as if every living thing was about to spring and kill — I can't escape it. Perhaps it would not have caught me as it has if I had not been so close to the frontier. When I wrote you ten days ago — it seems a year — I told you that we were to follow the frontier from Belfort through Toul and Verdun with

a side trip to Metz, then on to Maubeuge and into Belgium. The men have a passion for forts, and they were obliged to go to Metz for business.

"On the evening of the 28th, just as we reached Verdun, the news came that Austria had at last declared war. We got into town all right and they took us into the hotel, but I thought we'd never get out. The air suddenly seemed to rain soldiers — and suspicion — the street swarmed with people and nobody talked or smiled.

"Verdun is so lovely. You look for miles over the country from the high terraces — the houses are so clean and trim. They look so stable — everything seems so settled to me here as if it had been living years upon years and had learned how to be happy and grow in one place. I wonder if that is the difference between the American and French towns. These places look as if nothing could disturb them. I'm sure if when I'm old and gray and come back to Verdun, it will all be the same and I'll sit on the terrace looking out on the Meuse and drink my coffee just as I did last Thursday night! — Only — only if the Germans should get near here — they can throw their hideous shells so far, the men say — I could fancy them popping a big one down right into the middle of our garden, scattering us right and left.

"Up to the time we reached Verdun we had sailed through. The most secret places were opened for us. But the fact that Austria had declared war on Serbia certainly slowed up our wheels. It looked on Wednesday as if we wouldn't be able to leave Verdun. Henry's friend — he always knows a man everywhere — wasn't there — he'd been suddenly called, transferred. Nobody knew us and everybody suspected us, but Mr. Laurence was determined to get into Belgium at once. We'd be free there, he said, and could play

around until things settled down. He had to use all his influence to get out. It was only when he enlisted our officer friends at Toul by telephone that he was allowed to go. We had just such a time at Maubeuge yesterday and certainly it looked like war there.

"They were beginning to cut down the trees — to open up the country and to put up barbed-wire fences — to hold up people — I couldn't help wondering if the wire came from Sabinsport. I never heard of such a thing. Henry says that his officer friend told him that the Germans on the other side of the frontier began clearing out trees and preparing wire entanglements five days ago and that was before Austria declared war. What does it mean?

"But here we are in Belgium — nice, neutral Belgium!

"Saturday, Aug. 1.

"I certainly can't make head or tail of European politics. We run as fast as they will let us from a country that hasn't declared war and that nobody has challenged, as I can see, but which merely thinks it may be attacked, to get into a country that everybody has signed a compact to let alone and live. This morning when I came down into the garden of this darling hotel to drink my coffee, I hear bells and commotion and I am told an order has come to *mobilize*. But what for? When Mr. Laurence and Henry came they said it was merely to protect neutrality. I don't see much in a neutrality that calls all the men out. It is harsh business for the people. I've been out in the streets and walking in the country for hours and I'm broken-hearted. It seems that the bell the police go up and down ringing means that they must go at once. There are posters all over the walls to the *Armée de Terre* and *Armée de mer*, telling them to lose no time. Why, this morning the man who was serving us left in

the middle of our meal, just saying '*Pardon, c'est la mobilization,*' and in three minutes Madame was fluttering around apologizing for a delay and telling us it wouldn't happen again, that she would serve us. Poor thing! she'll have to, for every man about her place, her only son included, followed that horrid bell. There's many a woman worse off than our landlady. There are the farmers' wives, left quite alone with cows, pigs, horses and the crops ready to harvest — some of them with not a soul to help them. They never complain, only say, '*C'est la guerre,*' but it isn't *la guerre* — at least, not in Belgium. How can it be, with her treaties!

“DINANT, Tuesday, August 3.

“I did not send this letter as I expected to. Mr. Laurence advised us to mail no letters until after the mobilization is well under way — says the tax on transportation is so heavy that the mails are held up. There is great difficulty even in getting Brussels by telephone or telegraph, and we've had no papers for three days.

“You see, I am still at Dinant, though we will leave in a few hours — if nothing happens! We were held by an incident of mobilization. Sunday afternoon while we were in a shop buying some fruit, a man came in hurriedly, leading a little boy and girl. He wanted the woman to take them while he was gone. Their mother was dead, he said. He had no one. The woman cried. She couldn't, she said; she had her own — her husband must go. She must keep the shop. How could she do it — how could she — and she appealed to me. The poor fellow looked so wretched and the children so pretty that Henry, who has the kindest heart in the world, said, 'See here, let *me* have the kids. I'll find somebody to keep them.' 'But I have no money,' the man said. 'Well, never

mind — I'll see to that,' and, would you believe it? that man marched off leaving Henry Laurence with two solemn little Belgians. Well, we had to stay in Dinant forty-eight hours longer than we'd expected while Henry found a place for them. We had such fun! He found a dear old lady in a nice little house, and everybody said she'd be kind to them, and Henry arranged at the bank for weekly payments as long as the father has to be away. He could do that without trouble because his firm has a branch in Brussels, and a man here handles their goods. We're going this evening to say good-by and then north to Namur, which is only fifteen miles away. We follow the Meuse — it will be a lovely ride.

“NAMUR, August 5.

“An awful, a wicked thing has happened. I can't believe it is true. Last night when we reached our hotel here, the first thing we heard was that Germany had crossed the Belgian frontier. Mr. Laurence and Henry grew quite angry with the proprietor — whom they know very well, as the firm has offices here — for repeating such a rumor, but he insisted he was right. Germany couldn't do such a thing, Henry insisted. The man only shrugged and said what everybody says here: '*Guillaume est la cause.*' ('William did it.') You hear the peasants in the fields say the same thing. They don't say the kaiser, or the emperor, or William II; just William — as one might speak about a rich and powerful relative that he didn't like or approve of but had to obey.

“Well, it is true. They crossed on Tuesday at the very time we were having such fun placing our two little Dinantais — and to-day, oh, Mother dear, I can't write it — they have attacked Liège. Nobody seems to know just what has happened. It is sure that the Belgians were told by Germany that they would

not be disturbed. Henry came in this afternoon with a copy of a Brussels paper in which only two days ago the German Minister to Brussels said in an interview that Belgium need have no fear from Germany. 'Your neighbor's house may burn but yours will be safe'—his very words. Think of that!—and at the very time he uttered them their armies were there ready to cross. The King must be a perfect brick. The Germans sent him a message, telling him what they proposed to do. He called the parliament instant and read them the document. It was in the Brussels papers. It began by saying that the French intended to march down the Meuse by Givet—a town on the border only a little distance from Dinant—and then on to Namur into Germany!

"There never was such a lie. Why, we have just come from there. There wasn't a sign of such a thing. The French army didn't begin to mobilize until Sunday, and it will take days and days, and here Germany is *in* Belgium. She says that she won't hurt the Belgians if they will let her march through so as to attack France—and she gives them twelve hours to decide—think of that. Doesn't it make you want to fight yourself? The cowards! It is like a knife in the back. But I am proud of little Belgium. They say the king and parliament sat up all night going over things and in the morning they sent back word 'No, the Germans could not pass with Belgium's consent and if they tried to she'd fight,' and she's doing it!

"Everything has gone to pieces, mail—news—even money. The men can't get any, and we're down to about five francs apiece. You ought to see the high and mighty Laurences without a dollar in their pockets—I wouldn't have missed it for a fortune. They are like two helpless kids. They've always had it and depended on it to get them everything they wanted and

to make everybody else do everything they wanted done. Now they can't get it and they wouldn't be more helpless if their legs had been unhooked. The trouble is we can't get to Brussels without money — for they've *taken the car!* Doesn't it sound like a comic opera, Mother dear? I forgot you never saw one, but it's just such crazy things they do. We've credit, at least, for the firm has an agent here — a big one; but the office is closed, for the agent and bookkeepers are mobilized. Suddenly we, Mr. Laurence and Henry and their proud corporation, are nobody. It won't last. It's inconvenient, but it's good for them. They somehow were so sure of things — of Germany, of the power of the firm, of themselves — when they had their pockets full and now — why, now we're beggars! But we're American beggars and I tell you it does brace one up to remember that.

“NAMUR, Friday, August 7.

“We are still here at Namur, dearest one, and when the wind is right we can hear the guns firing. It is the Germans at Liège. So far the Belgians are holding them. Isn't it glorious? The people are crazy with pride and joy. Of course we would not be here if it were not for the trouble about money and the delay in getting back our car. Mr. Laurence would not have waited for that, but Martha is really ill and he was afraid that the journey to Brussels in the over-crowded trains and with the delays and discomforts might be serious for her. We couldn't be in a safer place, I suppose, if we must stand a siege. The people say Namur has the strongest fortifications in Belgium. There are nine great forts around the town — not close — three or four miles off. There is a wonderful old fortification on the hill above the river, and from there you can see over the country for miles —

a much better place for a fort it seems to me than off out in the country, but I suppose that's my ignorance.

"You would never believe the place was preparing for a siege. It is more like a fête. There are flags everywhere — the French and English with the Belgian. There are no end of soldiers. They are building barricades in the streets, but people go on so naturally. The old men and women are harvesting. Here and there on the river bank you see a fisherman holding his pole as placidly as if there was not a German in a thousand miles. The fussy little steamers and boats with lovely red square sails go up and down the rivers just as usual. And yet this moment if I listen I can hear a distant roar that they tell me is the guns at Liège.

"Thursday — Later.

"We are going in the morning — if they will let us. The car has been turned back. News has just come that yesterday the Germans were seen in Dinant — looking for the French that they made their excuse for invading Belgium, I suppose. It has frightened Mr. Laurence and Henry and they want to get to Brussels. The news from Liège is very queer. We can't tell how true it is, but the attack seems to be heavier and to-day there flew over this town a great German airplane! spying on us, of course. It was white, with a big blue spot on each wing, and looked for all the world like a great scarab, and such a racket as it made!

"I watched it from the street floating over the town so insolent and calm, and I wanted to *kill* it. I wasn't the only one. I saw a Belgian workman do the funniest thing. He shook his fist at it, screaming threats and then — spit at it!

"BRUSSELS, August 10.

"We are here at last, dearest, and they tell me I can get off a letter — maybe. We were all day yester-

day getting here — about sixty miles — think of that for a car of the Laurences. It is all funny now, but there were moments when it was anything but that. The entire Belgian population between Namur and Brussels seems to be on guard. They are spy mad. We were not out of sight of one set of guards before another had us. We had all sorts of passports, but they took their own time making sure and sometimes it was long, for I don't believe they could always read. There were soldiers and civil guards all holding us up, and when they were not on the road it was the peasants themselves. Why, in one little town a regiment of armed peasants stopped us. Mr. Laurence said they must have raided the firearms' department of a historical museum to get the weapons they carried; rusty old antiques that probably wouldn't work if they did try to fire. They arrested us and took us to the Burgomaster, and it took two hours to convince him we weren't spies. I'm sure he couldn't read our passports. Finally the curé came in and he understood at once. He scolded them like children — told them they would offend their noble English ally if they stopped Americans. So they let us off and even cheered us as we went.

"We reached Brussels finally and found that Mr. Laurence's people had arranged everything. You feel so safe here as if you could breathe. I suppose it's because of our embassy and the office, though the office has been turned into a hospital. Hundreds of wounded are coming in. The Red Cross is at work raising money, and somebody jingles a cup under your nose every time you go out. The town is full of boy scouts, too — they say they've taken over all the messenger service.

"Mr. Laurence had just come in and says letters will go. He tells me, too, that you've been worried —

that his cablegram from Namur didn't get through — that there are inquiries here at the embassy for *me*. He says you think I'm lost. Oh, my dear, I never thought of that. But you'll surely get your wire from Washington to-day, he says. His New York office will wire every day. I couldn't sleep if I thought of you worried. Will see you are regularly posted. Will leave for London as soon as Martha is stronger, and I will sail for America as soon as I can get a ship.

“Your loving PATSY.”

It was on August 22nd that the McCullons received this letter. That afternoon came a message saying that Patsy had reached London. It was many days before they were to know of the experiences of the ten days between letter and message, experiences which were to kindle in the girl that anger and that pity from which her first great passion for other people than her own was to spring.

It was not necessary for Sabinsport to receive Patsy's letter in order to make up its mind about the invasion of Belgium. There were many things involved in the Great War that Sabinsport was to learn only after long months of slow and cumbersome meditation, months upon months of wearing, puzzled watching. They were things hard for her to learn, for they contradicted all her little teaching in world relations and bade her enter where the traditions of her land as she had learned them had forbidden her to go; they forced her, a landsman, to whom the seas and their laws and meanings were remote and unreal, to come to a realization of what the seas meant to her, the things she made and the children she bore; they forced her to understand that the flag and laws which protected her homes must protect ships on the water, for as her home

was her castle so were ships the sailor's castle; they forced her to lay aside old prejudices against England; they forced her to a passion of pity and pride and protective love for France; they forced her to an understanding of the utter contradiction between her beliefs and ideals and the beliefs and ideals of the Power that had brought the war on the world. Poor little Sabinsport! Born only to know and to desire her own corner of the earth, wishing only that her people should be free to work out their lives in peace — she had a long road to travel before her mind could grasp the mighty problems the Great War had put up to the peoples of the earth, before her heart could feel as her own the passions and aspirations that burned and drove onward the scores of big and little peoples that fate had brought into the struggle.

But there was no problem in Belgium's case. Germany had sworn to respect her neutrality and she had broken her oath. She had followed this breach of faith with unheard of violence, destruction, wantonness, pillage, cruelty, lust.

This was true.

Now Sabinsport was simple-minded. She was not very good — that is, not without her own cynicism, hard-headedness, hypocrisies. She didn't pretend to any great virtue, but she would not stand for broken contracts. "You couldn't do business that way," was the common feeling in Sabinsport. She was harsh with people who broke bargains and saw to it always they were punished. If the sinner was able by influence in bribery or cleverness to escape the law, Sabinsport punished him in her own way. She never forgot and she built up a cloud of suspicion about the man so that he knew she had not forgotten. Men had left Sabinsport because of her intangible, persistent disapproval of

violated agreements, repudiated debts. The invasion of Belgium, then, was classed in the town's mind with the things she wouldn't stand for.

Moreover, the deed had been done with cruelty, and Sabinsport could not stand for that. She might — and did — overlook a great deal of the normal cruelty of daily life — cruelties of neglect and snobbery and bad conditions, but the out-and-out thing she wouldn't stand. A boy caught tying a tin can to a dog's tail in Sabinsport would be threatened by the police, held up to scorn in school and thrashed at home. A man who beat his wife or child went to jail, and one of Sabinsport's reasons for mistrusting the motley group of foreigners in its mines and mills was the stories of their harsh treatment of their women.

The steady flow of news of repeated, continued violence in Belgium stirred Sabinsport to deeper and deeper indignation. The Sunday before Patsy's letter arrived a group of leading men and women asked Dick to start a relief fund; the Sunday after, almost everybody doubled his subscription, for the letter clinched their personal judgment of the case. "She's been there; she says it as we thought."

There was another element in Belgium's case that took a mighty grip on Sabinsport, particularly the men and boys. It was the little nation's courage. Many a man came to Dick with a subscription because it was so "damned plucky." Belgium's courage had no deeper admirers than Mulligan and Cowder. Jake swore long and loud and gave generously. Cowder said little, but the largest sum the fund received in these first days was slipped into Dick's hand by Reuben Cowder with a simple, "Got guts — that country has."

It is not to be supposed that there were no dissenting voices, no doubts, no qualifications in the matter on which the town formed its final judgment on Bel-

gium. There were people who intimated that Germany simply had beaten France and England to it. Sabinsport knit her brow and pondered. Possibly England had arranged with Belgium to let her through in case of attack—possibly France would have broken her word in case of need. However that might be, the fact was that it was Germany that had abused her oath and not France or England, and she did it at the moment when neither of the others was thinking of such a maneuver and was unprepared for it. Belgium might be surrounded by rogue nations, but still there is a choice in rogues. Only one so far had proved itself a rogue. Sabinsport dismissed the doubt from her mind. The facts were against it.

There were people, too, a few, who protested against Belgium's resistance to Germany. Dick was not surprised to hear that a certain important pillar on the financial side of his own flock had decried the sacrifice as "impractical." "All very well to be brave," he said, "but one should distinguish in important matters in this life between the practical and impractical. I call this foolish resistance—couldn't possibly hold that army, and if they had let it pass they would have been paid well. Foolish waste of life and property I call it." But the gentleman ceased his talk after listening a few times to the strongly expressed contempt of those of his colleagues who did not fear him for his gospel of honor when practical.

Whatever the dissent, the protest, the argument, Dick had a feeling that it was weighed and that it tipped the scale of opinion not the hundredth part of an ounce more than it was worth. It seemed to him sometimes that he was looking at a mixture of chemicals watching for a crystallization—would it come true to the laws in which he had faith? And it did;

whatever the fact and fancy, the logic and nonsense, poured into Sabinsport's head, a sound sensible view came out. His satisfaction in the popular opinion of the town, as he caught it in his running up and down, was the deepest of his troubled days. And the Reverend Richard Ingraham's days were full of trouble.

There was Ralph Gardner — his dearest friend. They were not getting on at all. The war had broken in on Ralph's schemes for regenerating Sabinsport at a moment when her open indifference to her own salvation was making him furious and obstinate. It had cut off all possible chance for a campaign. It filled the air with new sympathies and feelings. It thrust rudely out of field matters to which men had been giving their lives. It demanded attention to facts, relations, situations, ideas that until now were unheard of. Insist as Ralph did in the *Argus* and out that the war was the affair of another hemisphere, it continued to force his hand, challenge his attention, change the current of the activities which he held so dear. As the days went on it grew in importance, engulfed more and more people, began to threaten ominously the very existence of the town itself.

Ralph struggled hopelessly against the flood, refusing to accept the collected opinion, the popular conclusions. Particularly did he refuse to join the condemnation of Germany. Let us understand Germany, was his constant plea. He was seeking to bolster the long-held faith that in the social developments of Germany lay the real hope of civilization. Their relation to German Kultur, he did not even dimly see. They were Kultur for him and all there was of it. Because Germany had worked out fine and practical systems of social insurance and industrial safety, and housing and employment, he could not believe her capable of other than humane and fair dealing with all the world. He

was ready, for the sake of this faith, to explain away a great and growing mass of facts which to people of no such intellectual engagement were unanswerable. He found himself more and more at disagreement not only with Dick, his best friend, and the town, but with certain imperative, inner doubts that would not be quiet, and in this struggle he was getting little help from Dick.

The war had quickly opened itself to Dick as something prodigious, murderous — all-inclusive. He saw the earth encircled by it — felt the inevitableness finally of the entrance of the United States. From the start it had been clear to him, as it could not have been to one who had not known the thought and passion of the German ruling class, that this must become the most desperate struggle the earth had yet seen between those who felt themselves fit and appointed to plan and rule in orderly fashion the lives of men and the blundering, groping mass fumbling at expression but forever indomitable in its determination to rule itself.

Dick felt that he must get into it, the very thick of it, nothing but the limit — the direct, utter giving of himself — his body, his blood, would satisfy the passion that seized him. He would go to Canada and enlist. And with the determination there came a tormenting uncertainty. Would they accept him? All his life he had lived under a restraint — his guardian — physicians in almost every great center of the world had impressed it repeatedly upon him: "No great exertion, no great excitements. Nothing to fear with normal, steady living, everything from strain."

His guardian had put it to him early: "This is a sporting proposition, Dick; you were born with this physical handicap. You can live a long, full, useful life without danger if you are willing to live within certain physical and mental limitations. Moderation, calm cheerfulness, courage; that will carry you through.

It's a man's code, Dick. Make up your mind now and never forget the limits."

Dick had done it easily — at the start. Restraint had become the habit of his life. Only now and then he felt a pang. Sports of the severe sort were closed to him. He went through Europe for years with the imperative call of the snow mountain in his soul and never answered it.

And now? He determined before the close of August that, come what would, he would enlist. He could slip past some way, and so with only an evasive explanation to Ralph he went to Montreal. It was a ghastly and heart-breaking experience. He tried again and again, and no examiner would pass him. He went to the greatest of Canadian specialists — a wise and understanding man. "Give up the idea, boy," he said gently. "You might live six months. The chances are you would not one. You have no right to insist for the good of the service. And let me tell you something. You are not the only man to-day who feels that to be denied the chance to fling himself into this mighty thing is the greatest calamity life could offer. We men who are too old feel it. Many a man with burdens of political, social, professional, industrial responsibility in him so imperative that he must remain here, feels it. You are one of a great host to whom is denied the very final essence of human experience, giving their blood — for the finest vision the earth has yet seen. Don't let it down you. Go home to the States and help them to learn what this thing means. They can't know. It is different with us. Where England leads, Canada follows. The States will go in only as the result of an inner conviction that this struggle is between the kind of things they stand for and the kind of things which led them to their original break with England, their

original vision and plan of government. That is what it is, but your people will be slow to see it. They are not attacked. England and France are. It is not fear of attack that will finally take you in. You yourself have said that. It is the consciousness that the right of self-government by peoples on this earth is threatened. Go back and help your land see it."

Dick scarcely heard the counsel. He was conscious only of his sentence and he refused to accept that. He went in turn to the leading specialists in the States, men whom he had consulted in the past, and from each heard the same verdict. He knew they were right. That was the dreadful truth. He knew that forcing himself into service, as he might very well do in England under the circumstances of the moment there, would mean training a man who could not hold out instead of one who could.

Dick went back to Sabinsport a beaten, miserable man. Ralph was quick to sense that some overwhelming rebuff had come to Dick. He suspected what it was. If Dick had not been too crushed at the moment to realize that his dear but limited and obstinate friend was making awkward efforts to show his sympathy, it is quite possible that they might have come together sufficiently to discuss the war without rancor. But Dick was blind to everything but his own misery. He failed Ralph utterly.

He said to himself daily, "I am of no use on the earth; thirty-five — a fortune I did not earn, an education, relations, experiences prepared for me; a profession adopted as a refuge in a time of need; a citizen of a country in which I have not taken root; an accident in the only spot on earth where I've ever done an honest day's work; the very companions of my student days throwing themselves into a noble struggle in which

I would gladly die and from which I'm hopelessly debarred. A useless bit of drifting wreckage, why live?"

It was the victory of the Marne which, coming as it did at the moment of his deepest despair, pulled Dick back into something like normal courage and cheer. The probability that Paris would fall into German hands had filled him with horror. When he read the first headlines of the turn of the battle, he had bowed his head and sobbed aloud, "Thank God, thank God."

All over the land that September morning hundreds of Americans who knew and loved their France like Dick, sobbed broken thanks to the Almighty. If for the millions it was simply an amazing turn in the war, an unexpected proof that Germany was not as invulnerable as she had made them believe, for these hundreds it was a relief from a pain that had become intolerable.

Dick was not the only one in Sabinsport, however, that the victory of the Marne stirred to the depths. John A. Papalogos hung out a French flag over his fruit and startled the children by giving them handfuls of his wares, the grown-ups by his reckless measures and everybody by an abandon of enthusiasm which not a few regarded as suspicious. "Must have been drinking," Mary Sabins told Tom when he came home for lunch.

At the mines the effect was serious. The Slavs fell on the Austrians and beat them unmercifully. It was the only way they knew to answer the arrogance that the German advance had brought out. It was worth noting that in the general *mêlée* the Italian miners sided with the Slavs.

The barrier between Dick and Ralph was still up when Patsy arrived. They all knew by this time something of what the girl had seen between her letter of August 10th mailed in Brussels and her arrival in

London the twenty-first. Held by the unwillingness of Mr. Laurence to allow his wife to travel until she was stronger and by his inability to believe that the invasion of Belgium could be the monstrous thing it proved and by his complacent faith that nothing anyway could harm an American business man, it was not until the 19th he obeyed the imperative order of the embassy to go while he could. In those days of waiting, Patsy had come into daily contact with the horrors and miseries of war. She had seen Brussels filling up with wounded, had spent lavishly of her strength and of Laurence money in helping improvise hospitals and in feeding, nursing and comforting refugees. She had lived years in days.

The letters they had received before she arrived were broken cries of amazed pity. "I cannot write of what I see," she had said. "Refugees fill the streets, coming from every direction, on foot, beside dog carts, on farm wagons piled high with all sorts of stuff. They are all so white and tired and bewildered — and they are so like the folks around home. It's the old people that break my heart. Somehow it seems more terrible for them than even the children, though they take it so quietly. We picked up an old woman of eighty to-day. She might have been old Mother Peters out at Cowder's Corners — never before in a great city — her son killed at Louvain — her daughter-in-law lost — nobody she knew — no money — a poor, wandering, helpless old soul. Of course we've found her a place and left money, but what is that? — she's alone and we're going and there are so many of them and the Germans are coming — what will they all do — what will they all do?" . . .

On August 18th she wrote:

"We're going, rushing away almost as the poor

souls we've been helping rushed here. We're leaving them — I feel like a coward, but we're only in the way, after all. Nothing you can do counts."

On August 22nd she had written from London after a flight of hardship and horrors:

"We're here at last. I cannot believe that there is a place where people are safe, where they do not fly and starve. England after Belgium! It is so sweet, but it does not seem right. I cannot consent to be calm when just over there those dreadful things are happening. But every one here is working to care for the refugees that are coming in by the hundreds. You must not be surprised if I come home with an armful of Belgian orphans."

A paragraph in a last letter aroused keen interest in Sabinsport when it was noised around.

"At one of the stations for Belgian refugees I found Nancy Cowder. It was she who recognized me. I was giving my address, promising to raise money in America, when a girl standing near said, 'Did you say Sabinsport? It is your home? You are returning?'

" 'Yes,' I said.

" 'It is my home, too. I am Nancy Cowder. Will you tell my father you saw me, that I am well, and that he is not to be anxious?'

"I was never so surprised. Why, Mother, she looks the very great lady. I know all of that hateful gossip about her is not true. It can't be. I've found out a lot about her here."

"Trust Patsy for that," growled Ralph, when he and Dick read the letter.

"She has heaps of friends and is staying with Lady Betty Barstow. She's been working day and night since the war began. At the Embassy an attaché told me she was about the most level-headed and really useful American woman he'd seen — 'And beautiful and interesting and generous,' he added. This is another case where Sabinsport has been wrong."

Dick and Ralph were curious about Patsy's encounter, for they long ago had discovered that Nancy Cowder was one of Sabinsport's standing subjects of gossip, that the town considered her highly improper. There seemed to be two reasons: one was the general disapproval of anything that belonged to Reuben Cowder, and then the notion that "a girl who raised dogs and horses and took them east, even to England, could not be 'nice.'"

Dick was much amused when he learned that the Sabinsport skeleton, as Ralph had always called Nancy Cowder, was visiting the Barstows. "She must be all right," he mused, "or she would not be in that house." You see, Dick had known Lady Barstow's brother at Oxford and more than once had passed a week-end with him at his sister's place.

But Nancy Cowder was quickly forgotten in Patsy's return. She came a new Patsy, thin and pale, with the energy and the spirit of a Crusader in her blazing eyes. Belgium and her wrongs had been burnt into Patsy's soul. It was her first great unselfish passion. It had made her tender beyond belief with her father and mother. The two restrained, inexpressive old people were almost embarrassed by the tears and the kisses she showered on them. This was not their business-like, assertive girl, absorbed in her own plans and insisting on her own ways. It was a girl who watched them with almost annoying persistence, who wanted to save

them steps, guard them from imaginary danger, give them pleasures they had never even coveted. What they did not realize was that, as Patsy looked into their faces, visions of distracted, homeless Belgian women, of broken, wounded Belgian men, floated before her eyes, that she found relief in doing for them even unnecessary services since she could do nothing for those others.

Patsy's passion made her hard on the town. She demanded that it champion Belgium's cause as she had, with all its soul and all its resources; that it think of nothing else. But this it could not do. Sabinsport, ignorant and distant as it was, had developed something of a perspective and was sensing daily something of the complexity of the elements in the war. It could not think singly of Belgium.

Ralph, bitter in spirit at finding Patsy so changed, so absorbed in her conception of her own and her friends' duty, took her to task for emotionalism. He forced arguments on her: that Germany was the only bulwark between civilization and the Russian peril; that she had been hampered by an envious England; that if Germany had not violated Belgium, France would. If Ralph had not been stung to jealousy by Patsy's interest in something outside himself he would never have been as stupid and as unreasonable as he proved. He knew he was wrong. He knew that he admired her for the unselfish passion she showed. He knew he hurt her, but he *wanted* to hurt her!

Patsy — bewildered, shocked, wounded to the heart by Ralph's talk — promptly forbade him ever to speak to her again and went home and for the first time in her life cried herself to sleep. She had not known how completely she was counting on Ralph's sympathy. She had said to herself: "Now I know something of what he feels about people who suffer; he'll know I

understand; we can work together." And here was her dream dissolved. Patsy was learning that war is not the only destroyer of human happiness and hopes.

Ralph charged their quarrel to the war, as he did everything not to his liking. Every day he pounded more emphatically on the wrong of all wars and particularly this war. Every day he preached neutrality, though it must be confessed that he did it all with decreasing faith. It was a hard rôle. He was a man without a text in which he believed to the full. Then suddenly in October he found what he was searching. Reuben Cowder had landed a munition contract. He was to convert a factory made idle by the war and build largely. Ralph was himself again. No self-respecting community should permit money to be made within its limits from war supplies. It was blood money.

CHAPTER III

YOU might be a town 500 miles from the Atlantic coast and 3500 miles from the fighting line, but, nevertheless, you would have felt, in October of 1914, as Sabinsport did, a very genuine concern about your ability to get through the winter without hunger and cold. The jar of Germany's first blow at Western Europe was felt in Sabinsport twenty-four hours after it was dealt. When the stock exchanges of the cities closed, credit shut up in every town of the country. The first instinctive thought of every man and woman who had debts to pay or projects to carry out was, "Where will I get the money?" The instant thought of every bank was to protect its funds — no panic — no run — but caution. Sabinsport began to "sit tight" in money matters on August 5th — and she sat tighter every day — and with reason. Orders in her mills and factories were canceled. Men went on half time. The purchasing power of the majority fell off. Men began to figure the chances of the length of the war in order to decide what they as individuals could do until they would be able again to get orders and so have work to offer; when they would be able to get a job and so pay the grocer; when they must stop credit to the retail buyer because the wholesaler had cut off their credit — these were the thoughts that occupied the mind of Sabinsport much more generally than the European war and its causes. There was a strong feeling that it would be a short war — another 1870 — take Paris and the business would be over, Sabinsport believed; and, though there was real satisfaction over the turning back of the Germans at the Marne, there

was a sigh, for they knew the anxiety they felt was to continue and increase.

"You see," Ralph said to Dick, "they're only concerned about themselves and what the war will do to them."

"Don't you think it's a matter of concern to Sabinsport whether the mills are open or shut this winter, whether we have half or full time?" asked Dick.

"It isn't the working man they think of; it's themselves," Ralph insisted.

"And I suppose the only one the working man thinks of is himself. We must each figure it for himself, Ralph, or become public charges. It strikes me this concern is quite a proper matter for men who are not as lucky as you and I are. We have our income; no thanks, however, to anything either of us ever did. Our fathers were men of thrift and foresight, and the war will hardly disturb us. But there are few in Sabinsport like us. I should say it was as much the duty of Sabinsport business men to concern themselves about orders as it is the business of Paris to put in munitions. No work and you'll soon have no town."

"It is a rich town," challenged Ralph. "There's lot of money here — they could keep things going if they would."

"Rich when there are orders to fill, and only then. Don't be unreasonable. You know this town lives by work."

"Reuben Cowder and Jake Mulligan have \$500,000 a year income if they have a cent; do you suppose they earn it?"

"Well, they won't have a hundredth part of that, Ralph, if the mills and mines are closed this year. You certainly are not supposing that the money they circulate here is piled up in a chest in the banks. It comes from the sale of coal and barbed wire and iron plates

and bars and hosiery and sewer pipe, and stops when they are no longer made. Let the shut-down continue, and who is going to use the street railways and the electric lights that Mulligan and Cowder and half High Town draw dividends from? Who is going to support the shops, buy the farmers' produce? Sabinsport is rich only when her properties are active. You know that. There are few men in the country who make every dollar work all the time as Mulligan and Cowder do, and if the work stops, their incomes stop. Their activity is the biggest factor in the life of the place, and every business man knows it."

But Ralph broke in with a bitter harangue. Sabinsport, he declared, thought only of herself, her comfort, her pleasures. She had no real interest in human betterment, no concern that the men and women who did the work of her industries were well or happy. If her business men worried about having no work to give now it was simply because, as Dick himself admitted, that they would have no income if the fires were out. Did they concern themselves about the worker when things were going well? Not for a moment. Did they study a proper division of the returns of labor? Not on your life, they studied how to get the lion's share. Ralph's ordinary dissatisfaction with affairs in Sabinsport was intensified by his disgust at the incredible turn things had taken in his world and by his helplessness to change them or to escape them. He might rail at the war in the *Argus*, but nobody listened. He might beg and implore that they put their house in order instead of keeping their eyes turned overseas, but it was so useless that even he sensed it was silly. Sabinsport was concerned only with figuring where she was going to get bed and board for 15,000 people through the coming winter.

The first relief from threatening idleness and bankruptcy that came was an order for barbed wire for England. Reuben Cowder had gone East and brought it back. It looked easy enough to Ralph, but Cowder himself had put in two as hard and anxious weeks as he had ever known, landing the contract. The "big ones" were after all there was and they got most of it. Moderate-sized, independent plants, like the Sabinsport wire mill, had to compete with companies which as yet were only names — but they were names backed by the great bankers that controlled the orders. Companies long ago launched by financiers for making rubber shoes or tin cans or vacuum cleaners — anything and everything except what was needed for war — landed huge contracts, and the orders waited while they converted and manned the plants and sold at high prices stock that had long lain untouched in the tens or twenties or thirties. This was happening when men like Cowder, ready at once to go to work, begged and threatened to get what they felt was their share.

The news that the wire mill would open at once on full time ran up and down the street on quick feet, and such rejoicing as it brought! Women who had ceased to go to the butcher's went confidently in. "Jim goes to work to-morrow, can you trust me for a boiling piece?" and the butcher, as pleased as his customer, said, "Sure," cut it with a whistle and threw in a few ounces. Over on the South Side where there had been grumblings and quarreling for nights, there was singing and laughing. The women cleaned houses that, in their despair, they'd let grow sloven, and the men brought in the water and played games with the children. Oh, the promise of wire to make stirred all Sabinsport with hope. Dick, going over to the live South Side Club, found a larger group than usual and a livelier curiosity

about the war. They could think of it, now that they were not forced to think so much and so sullenly of where the next meal was coming from.

A few weeks later a new reason for hope came to Sabinsport. Reuben Cowder had landed a munition contract. He was going to convert the linoleum factory "around the point." It was to be a big concern, give work to a thousand girls besides the men. The wages were to be "grand," the girls in the ten-cent store heard, and more than one of them on six dollars a week said, "Me for the munitions if it's more money."

The rumor was not idle, for early in December the building began. Sabinsport would not go hungry in the winter of 1914-15. The war that had raised the specter had taken it away.

"And because the war has made us easy in our pockets again, we are all for the war," sneered Ralph.

"Are we?" said Dick. "I doubt it. So far as I can see, we are puppets of the war as is all the rest of the world."

"We could refuse to make its infernal food. We could hold ourselves above its blood money. Reuben Cowder doesn't care how he makes money if he makes it."

"And by that argument the men and women in the mills and to be in the new mill don't care as long as they make it," retorted Ralph.

"We're hardening our hearts,"—and to save Sabinsport's soul, as he claimed, Ralph began a lively campaign against the making and exporting of munitions to other nations. It was a new idea to Sabinsport. To make what the world would buy, of the quality it would take, was simply common sense to her mind. She had nothing in her code of industrial ethics which put a limitation on any kind of manufacturing except beer and

whiskey. Sabinsport had never had a brewery or a distillery. It would have hurt her conscience to have had one. Indeed the only time she had ever out and out fought and beaten the combination of Mulligan and Cowder was when they attempted to establish a brewery. The opposition had been so general and it had been of such a kind that the men had withdrawn. "It isn't worth fighting to a finish," Cowder had told Jake. "We'll have bigger game one of these days, and we don't want the town to be against us."

But Sabinsport had seen without a flicker of conscience the cheapest of cheap hose, the kind that ravel at a first wearing, turned out by the tens of thousands. Somebody had once remarked that the firm must use the fact that its hose could be guaranteed to break the first time worn, with buyers. "The more sold the larger the commission," laughed Sabinsport. It didn't hurt her conscience that there was truth in the remark. It didn't disturb her conscience now as a town that the mills were turning out hundreds and hundreds of spools of a crueller barbed wire than they had ever before seen. It didn't disturb it that around the point a great-scale conversion of the never-very-successful linoleum factory into some kind of a shell factory was going on.

But if not conscience stricken, Sabinsport was interested in the discussion. It stirred deeper than Ralph in his disgust with the situation had dreamed. Letters to his *Pro Bono Publico* column flowed in daily. From the mill came a violent arraignment of capital for making the war in order to make munitions. It was from the leading Socialist of the labor group, an excellent fellow who talked well but difficult to argue with, both Ralph and Dick had found. There was nothing to argue about the ruining of the world, in John Starrett's judgment. His system would remove all evils. His task was the simple one of affirmation. All evils

come from capitalism — do away with capitalism, institute socialism, and the machine will run itself. The *Argus* was right in disapproving of munition making by a neutral country, said John Starrett, but so long as the *Argus* failed to see that it was the iniquitous system it supported which was to blame, etc., etc.

The one always-to-be-counted-on pulpit radical in the town seized the chance for opposition and preached eloquent and moving sermons on the horrors of wars, the gist of which he weekly sent, neatly typewritten, to Ralph for the P. B. P., as it was called in the office. His argument was that this wicked thing could not go on if all men everywhere would refuse to work on guns and shells and powder, that it was the duty of a great neutral country like the United States to head the movement, and why should not Sabinsport start it? She would go down in history as the leader in the most beneficent reform of modern times. The Rev. Mr. Pepper worked himself into a noble enthusiasm over this idea, and spent time and money his family really needed for food and clothes in writing and mailing letters to a long list of well-known radically inclined men and women in various parts of the country, begging them to join the Anti-Munition Making League. Ralph published the digests of the Pepper sermons, printed free his long circulars and listened to his argument, and Sabinsport read and smiled and went ahead with her work.

The two or three pacifists in the Woman's Club seized on the Reverend Pepper's idea with avidity. It was so simple, so sure — stop making munitions everywhere, and war would have to stop. But the Woman's Club, although in the main sympathetic, handled the matter gingerly. In the first place, the Rev. Mr. Pepper had always been "visionary," so the men said.

Then, too, they had the relief work of the town to consider. Stop munition making, close the wire mill, and what were the workmen to do? It wasn't right. Somebody would make munitions, why not Sabinsport? Of course, if the League did succeed and other towns went in, they would be for it; but they thought they better wait. In this policy of caution, it is useless to deny that there was an element of self-interest. The husbands of not a few of the ladies had stock in the wire mill and in the works "around the Point."

The hottest opposition that Ralph met in his anti-munition campaign was from the War Board, as he and Dick had come to call it. This War Board had evolved from a group which for years had met regularly after supper in the men's lounging room of the Paradise Hotel. Both Ralph and Dick considered it far and away the most entertaining center of public opinion in the town, for it offered a mixture of shrewdness and misinformation, of sense and cynicism, which were as illuminating as they were diverting — a mixture which spread, diluted and disintegrated, of course, into every nook and cranny of the town.

The War Board was made up of socially inclined guests and a group of citizens whose number varied with the character, the importance and the heat of public questions. Dick, who, since he first arrived in the town, had taken his dinners at the Paradise, found that the war was having the same drawing power as the choice of a mayor, a governor, or a president. Almost every night more or less men dropped in to discuss the progress of the campaigns and wrangle over the problems raised for this country.

A member of the War Board that never missed an evening was Captain William Blackman, as he appeared on the roster of Civil War veterans; "Cap"

or "Captain Billy" as he was known at the Paradise — "Captain If" as he came to be known a long time before we went into the war.

Captain Billy was seventy-two years old. He walked with a limp, the result of a wound received two days before the evacuation of Petersburg on April 2, 1865. His comfortable income was derived not from a pension which he had always spurned — he had *given* his services — but from a wholesale grocery business established in Sabinsport after a long and plucky struggle and on which he still kept a vigilant eye. Neither limp nor grocery had ever taken from Captain Billy's military air or dimmed his interest in the battles of the Potomac, in many of which he had taken part.

Captain Billy frequented the Paradise pretty regularly at election time, for he was a Republican of the adamant sort and felt it his duty to use every chance to impress on people the unfathomable folly of allowing a Democrat to hold any sort of office. But it was when there was a war anywhere on the earth that Captain Billy never missed a night. He never had any doubt about which side he was on, about the character and ability of generals or what they ought to do. He never for an instant hesitated over Belgium's case, or doubted the guilt of Germany. Much as he hated England — Civil War experience on top of a revolutionary inheritance — he defended loudly her going in, thought it the decentest thing in her history. It took Captain Billy at least three months to grasp the idea that we should have taken a hand at the start, but in this he was in no way behind the most eminent advocates of that theory. Like all of them at the start he accepted with sound instinct the doctrine of neutrality. Before Christmas, however, Captain Billy was hard at the Administration. "If we had done our duty in the

beginning," was his regular introduction to all arguments — hence the name which was soon fixed on him of "Captain If."

Mr. Jo Commons was as steady an attendant of the War Board as Uncle Billy, and in every way his antithesis. He had for years been the leading cynic and scoffer of Sabinsport. You could depend upon him to find the weak spot in anybody's argument, the hypocrisy in any generous action. According to Mr. Jo Commons there was no such thing as sound or noble sentiment. All human thought and feeling he held to be worm-eaten by self-interest, and he spent his leisure, of which he had much, for he was a bachelor with a law practice which he had studiously kept on a leisure basis, in unearthing reasons for mistrusting the undertakings of his fellowmen. The war gave him a wonderful chance. His was the first voice raised in Sabinsport in defense of the invasion of Belgium. His defense of Germany and his contempt for England were Shavian in their skill.

If Captain Billy contributed certainty, idealism and emotion to the Board, and Mr. Jo Commons doubt, realism and cynicism, a traveling salesman, Brutus Knox by name, kept it in suspicion and gossip. Brutus was a stout, jolly, clean-shaven, immaculate seller of "notions and machinery," and under this elastic head he handled a motley lot of stuff in a district where the Paradise was the most comfortable hotel; and it was his habit to "make it" for Sundays if possible.

Brutus was a master-hand at gossip. He liked it all, and told it all — gay and sad, true and false, sacred and obscene. He was always welcome at the Paradise, but never more so than since the war began, for he brought back weekly from Pullman smoking rooms, hotel lobbies and business lunches a bag of "in-

side information " which kept the War Board sitting until midnight and sent it home swollen with importance.

The War Board prided itself on being neutral — this in spite of the fact that nearly every one that attended had the most definite opinions about all parties in the conflict and that no one hesitated to express them with picturesque, often profane, violence. Almost to a man the War Board looked on the invasion of Belgium as rotten business. King Albert became its first hero. His picture — a clear and beautiful print from an illustrated Sunday supplement — was pinned up the third week of August. It came down only once — to be framed, and it was to be noted that on all holidays "Albert," as they called him, always had a wreath. The general verdict was that he was "American" — "looks like one" — "acts like one" — "been over here" — "no effete king about him." After the Marne, Joffre joined Albert on the lobby wall, and the two of them hung there alone — for nearly two years.

The War Board treated Ralph's ideas on munition making with almost unanimous ridicule. Indeed the only help he had at this body in defending his position came from a new friend, one who had begun occasionally to attend the sessions at the Paradise just after the war broke out. This was Otto Littman, the only son of Rupert Littman, the president of the Farmers' Bank, one of Sabinsport's most beloved citizens. Rupert Littman had been only ten years old when he and his father, a revolutionist of 1848, obliged to fly for his life, had settled in Sabinsport. The history of father and son was as familiar from that day to this as that of the Sabins, and Cowders and Mulligans and McCullons. Otto, however, was not so well known. He had been much away — four years in college, six in Germany studying banking and business methods, only

eighteen months at home, and in these eighteen months he had not been able to adjust himself to the town. The town felt that he sneered at her a little, which was true, felt himself "above her," which was true. Rupert Littman, dear heart, had been very much concerned that Otto did not "take" to Sabinsport, and he had confided to Dick once that he feared he had made a mistake in sending him back to Germany so long.

With the coming of the war Otto had begun to circulate more freely in Sabinsport. He had quite frankly undertaken to make the town "understand Germany," as he called it, and as Ralph had shown from the start his belief in neutrality and now his hatred of munition-making and exporting, Otto began to talk freely. According to Otto, it was England that had forced the war. "I like your consistency," he told Ralph. "It is the only attitude for Americans, but so few are intelligent enough to understand this case. Pure sentiment, this guff about Belgium. It is sad that people should get hurt in war. Read what the emperor says of his own grief at the disaster Belgium has brought on herself. Why should she resist? No reason save that France and England bribed her to it. They were both ready to attack Germany *via* Belgium. I know that. I can get you the proofs. What could Germany do when she knew that and knew Belgium had sold herself? Oh, you innocent Americans! It is always a little hurt or hunger that sets you crusading. You never look deeper. I'm glad to know a man that has more sense."

Otto kept Ralph stirred over England's seizures and examination of our ships and mail. "You see," he said, "talk about freedom of the seas — there is none. She can do as she will with the shipping of the world. What can the United States do if the day comes that England wants to drive her from the sea as she has

tried to drive Germany — bottle us up. I tell you, Gardner, if we don't join Germany in her fight for liberty, England will ruin us. England is the enemy of this country as she is the enemy of Germany. She can't tolerate greatness. She fears it. She has expected to keep Germany shut in; she can't tolerate our having a single colony. It's your duty to America's future to do your utmost to explain to Sabinsport what England's inner purpose is.

"Take what is happening to-day. She's forcing us to unneutral acts by her arrogance. She's preventing us from carrying out our right to sell to all nations — stopping our trade — destroying our goods. She has the power, and that's enough for her. There is no way to meet this but an embargo on munitions. If England won't let us sell to all lands, as is our right, we shouldn't sell to anybody." Ralph was entirely with him. That course would put an end to Cowder's pollution of Sabinsport's soul.

Now, Cowder and Mulligan were clever men. They knew, as Dick had frequently warned Ralph, that attaining your objective depends largely on your skill in maneuvering; that if you are going to hold your main line, you must sometimes give up long held positions. They had spiked small guns of Ralph's several times in the course of their fight in handling the mines and factories of Sabinsport by withdrawals from the points which he was besieging. There was accident compensation. After the accident at the "Emma" they had won the favor of labor leaders and the liberal-minded throughout the State by working out and putting into effect a compensation plan much broader than any reform agency had yet suggested. It was a shock to Ralph to see them honored.

Then there was the case of the coöperative stores. After much grumbling, they had consented to let Jack

try it out at the mines; and, having consented, they both had stirred themselves to make it a success. Mulligan particularly had spent much time among the miners, the men who had grown up with him, and who at the start no more liked the change than he did — explaining why they did it, how it was to be done, and how it might cut down their expenses if it was a success.

It put Ralph into a corner. You couldn't abuse men for doing the things you had abused them for not doing. You could hint that they were "insincere," but that was a little cheap — looked like sour grapes. It held up his campaign, which, for rapid promotion, had to have a villain, a steady, reliable villain that couldn't be educated, that wouldn't budge from his exploitation and greed. To have the villain come around to any part of your program was as bad as having a hero with feet of clay.

Cowder and Mulligan, watching the progress of the anti-munition campaign in the factory, decided something must be done. "I say," Jake told his friend, "that we put it up to the boys. The *Argus* is always howling about their not having anything to say about the way the mills are run; let's give 'em a chance. You know out at the mines that boy of mine has been having what he calls 'Mine Meetings.' He built a little clubhouse out there a year or so ago, and one night a week he goes out, and everybody that works in the mine can come in and they discuss things. There ain't anything about the mine that Jack don't let them talk about. I thought he was crazy when he started it, but ever since the accident I've kept my hands off, as you know. The funny part is that it seems to help things, and Jack claims he gets all sorts of good ideas. He says he is going to have these men running the mines, and I don't know but he will. I don't see where we will come in, but I promised to give him a free hand. I don't see,

Cowder, why we shouldn't try something like that now. Call the boys in the wire mill together some noon. Put it up to 'em. Let 'em vote whether they want to make wire or not. I'd like to see what the *Argus* would say if we tried that."

Reuben shook his head. "I'll think about it, Jake, and we'll talk it over again to-morrow."

There were few people in Sabinsport who credited Reuben Cowder with having a sense of humor, but deep down in his stern, suppressed nature there was considerable, and it came to the top now. To call a shop meeting appealed to him as effective repartee. I am quite sure, however, that if he had not been convinced that the men would vote to go on with the work, he would not have risked it. What he did want to do was to prove to Ralph and the shop agitators, whoever they might be, that ninety-five per cent. of the laboring body in the wire mill would not strike against making wire to sell to the Allies. They might strike for other reasons, but not for that. He was willing to try them out.

And so it happened, one morning in January, that the men coming to work found in conspicuous places around the yards and through the mills, a notice calling for a floor meeting at one o'clock the next day (you will note that Cowder and Mulligan were not taking the time for the gathering out of the men's noon hour), to discuss a question which concerned both the executive and laboring ends of the mill, preparatory to taking a vote.

There was not an inkling in the broadside of what the question to be discussed was; and when one o'clock of the day set came there was not a man of all the 1800 in the wire mill that could be spared from his post, who did not appear on the floor of the main building of the plant. They were a sight for sculptors and painters, gathered there around the great machines in the dusky light which filled the immense building — labor in all

of its virile strength, men from a dozen nations, in greasy, daubed garb lifted their strong, set faces to Jake Mulligan, who, from a cage dropped to a proper level by a great crane, addressed them.

He put it direct. "Boys," he said, "you know as well as I do that there's a lot of talk going up and down this mill about the wickedness of making things for war. Now, I never did, and never will, ask a man to do a thing that is against his conscience; and Mr. Cowder and I have concluded that we would like to know whether this is just talk or whether there is some of you fellows that really are doing something that you think is wrong. We have decided to take a vote on it, to find out how many of you think we ought to give up this contract.

"Of course you know — or you ought to know — that giving it up means shutting down the mill. There are no contracts for barbed wire to be had at present, except for war. I don't say that we will shut down even if you vote against it, but what we will do is to give you boys a chance to get another job somewhere else and we will get a new set of men. Or, if the most of you want to go on with the jobs that you are in, and a few of you really feel hurt about this thing, we will do the very best we can to find you something else to do. I don't say we will give you as good wages as we are giving you here. You know there is nothing else around this country that is paying like this mill, can't afford to.

"We want this to be a square vote. To-morrow night, when you leave the plant, the same time you punch the time clock, you are to put a ballot in a box at the gate. Nobody will know how you vote. The only thing we want is that everybody votes. It seems to me that's fair. That's all. Now you may go back to work."

The men, taken by utter surprise by the proposition, separated almost in silence. The crane dropped the cage containing Mulligan and Cowder to the floor, and the two walked out, saying, "Hello, Bill!" "Hello, John!" as they went along, as naturally as if nothing unusual had taken place.

There was a great buzz in Sabinsport that afternoon and the next day over this revolutionary procedure. At the banks and in the offices, Cowder and Mulligan were roundly condemned — not that there was much fear of how the men would vote. Business cynicism was strong in those circles. They felt sure that the wireworkers were like themselves, not going to give up a good thing for what they called an impractical ideal. What they did object to was the precedent. "You get this started," they told the pair, "and what does it mean for all of us? We cannot run our own business any longer. Putting things up to day laborers! I tell you it's a dangerous thing you have started in Sabinsport."

The maneuver had all the disquieting effect on Ralph that Cowder and Mulligan had anticipated. He felt very doubtful of the result, but he spent himself in an eloquent harangue to vote against the nefarious business into which capitalism had thrust them. Among the men the same kind of mistrust of the procedure that prevailed in financial and managing circles cropped out. The procedure was too new for them; and the suspicion that there was a trick somewhere which they did not see, ran up and down the shop. "Don't give up the job. They are trying to put something over on you." They did not give up the job. When the votes were counted, it was found that exactly ninety-eight per cent. were in favor of continuing the making of wire for war purposes.

But, even if the management had, as Jake claimed,

"put one over" on the *Argus* and its sympathizers, it had also given Ralph a text — an appealing text, too. "How? How?" said Ralph, "could you expect men whose bread and butter depend on day labor and who are told that the only labor to be had in this town where they live and have their families is making munitions of war, to give it up? What can they do?" And Ralph went far at that opportune moment to argue with his Socialist friend, John Starrett. His arguing was not heeded. For Sabinsport the matter was settled — ninety-eight per cent. of the wire workers had decided for going on with the work. Ralph found himself again outwitted. He realized that he must get another line of attack.

Zest and a bit of mystery was added to the discussion in the spring of 1915 by an incident which set the town to gossiping, but of which few ever knew all the facts — Dick, and Ralph through him, being among the few. It began by a rumor that Reuben Cowder had thrown a man out of his office! There was a suspicion that Otto Littman was the man, but *that* few believed — "It couldn't be!" Something had happened, however, and Cowder went about for days in one of the black moods which men knew only too well. He held a long conference with Rupert Littman, Otto went to New York for a time. It was said that there had been trouble over a munition contract.

One evening shortly after the rumor started, Dick was startled by a call from Cowder, the first he had ever received. That the man was deeply stirred was clear.

"I've got to talk to somebody, Ingraham, and there's nobody in this town but you I'd trust. It's against my habit to talk, you know that, and maybe I'm a fool to do it; but there's something going on in Sabinsport I don't like. I can't get my fingers on it. Maybe I'm

suspicious — maybe I ain't fair. Rupert Littman says I'm not, and he's an honest man and as good an American as I am. I'm not neutral. I don't pretend to be, though I don't talk much. You know we've begun to run around the Point. Turned out our first shells last week — good clean job. Inspector said he'd seen none better.

"Well, you know Otto holds quite a block of stock in the plant. I was surprised when he took it, but thought it was a good idea, and his father was tickled to death — told everybody he saw how Otto was going to settle down here now — had found out where his country was at last. Otto always seemed to take a lot of interest in the plant, got me two or three of the best workmen I ever saw and a wonder for the laboratory. Of course he knew where I got the contract — England. Of course he ought to have known I'd see the whole damned thing in the river before I'd sell a pound to Germany. He knows my girl's in Serbia.

"Well, in spite of that he came into my office the other day with a friend of his — never been here before — and wanted to make a contract big enough to tie up that plant for three years — and who do you suppose they said it was for? Sweden! 'But, suppose you ain't able to ship to Sweden?' I asked. 'Never mind,' they said — 'the contract holds — you're sure of the money.'

"'Otto,' I said, 'you're lying — your friend is lying. You can't make a contract with me.'

"'And that's what you call being neutral?' his friend said, with a look I didn't like.

"'I never said I was neutral,' I said. I guess I swore some. 'I ain't neutral. I want to see the French in the streets of Berlin and every damned Hohenzollern on earth earning his living at hard labor, that's how neutral I am.'

"Well, sir, Otto went white as death and he jumped at me as if he was going to hit me — and, well, I took him by the collar and threw him out and his friend after him.

"Now, one of the reasons I am telling you this is because I want you to keep your eyes open. Otto has a lot of influence over that young fool that runs the *Argus*. I must say I like that boy in spite of his fire-eating. He'll learn and he can write — but he's all muddled on the war, and I believe it's Otto that's keeping him so stirred up against England and so friendly to Germany. Why, it's vanity and ignorance that ails him, and he'll see it one of these days all of a sudden — but you watch him, Mr. Ingraham, and watch Otto."

The man stopped and sat for a long time in silence, his head dropped. When he looked up his mouth was twitching. "Otto Littman is the son of one of the best men that ever lived. He's a friend of my girl. The only boy here she ever let go out to see her. She has seen him in Europe. I guess they write sometimes. And I have quarreled with him. I have warned his own father against him. It is an awful thing to do, but, so help me, God, I can't do anything else. My girl's over there, Ingraham; I don't know as I'll ever see her again. Maybe you don't know about her. Maybe you've heard people here sneer at her — call her horsey and fast, but I tell you if there's a thoroughbred on earth it's Nancy. She was born out there at the farm, and her mother died when she came." The hard face worked convulsively and the hands gripped the arms of his chair until the brown skin showed white over the knuckles.

"She grew up out there. I had as fine a woman as I could find — educated — horse sense — to look after her, but we never could do much with Nancy. She wouldn't go to school but she'd read more books than

all the girls in Sabinsport before she was sixteen and spoke French and German like a native. She hated the town and she loved dogs and horses, and, by George, how she understood 'em. I never saw anything like it. Of course, I let her have all she wanted, and before I knew what I was getting into she was breeding 'em — had a stable, kennels, began to go East to horse shows, dog shows; go anywhere she heard of a good animal. Regular passion — didn't think of anything else. Funny to see her — so slight and fine and free-moving, talking to jockeys and breeders and bookmen — never seeing them — only the horses. 'Twan't long before horsemen began to listen to her, and she began to enter her own and then I lost her from here. Mrs. Peters is always with her, but Nancy is all right. Just naturally don't know anything but the best men or horses. Has an instinct for points. She is always saying she'll come back some day and stay. I wanted to build in town for her but she won't have it. Farm's home to her. But I don't expect ever to see her again, Ingraham.

"It was like her to throw herself in this thing. Never could stand it to see anything suffer — hated anything she thought was unjust.

"I tell you she rules me. Remember once you complimented me for leaving the old Paradise just as it came down to the town, building in the big addition as a kind of background, to set off the original? That was Nancy — would have it so — sent an architect here that she had coached herself. And you remember four years ago when I turned front on compensation — time of the big accident in the 'Emma'? Well, that was Nancy — got my orders from her. Queer thing how she keeps track of things here — reads the *Argus* every day, no matter where she is. She was all crumpled up over the 'Emma,' naturally enough —

and when the *Argus* began on compensation she wrote me a better argument than ever Gardner put up and told me she'd never take another dollar from me if I didn't support it. What could I do? I knew she meant it.

"She was visiting in London when the war came. Patsy McCullon saw her there — like her to go to Serbia. She said the Belgians were near and bound to get help, but everybody seemed to have forgotten Serbia. She went in October. I've had only a few letters — all cheerful — wouldn't do anything else — she's putting in all her income and it's a pretty good one. Nancy's rich as a girl ought to be, from her granddad and mother. I don't believe she'll ever come out. They're bound to run over the country. Nancy will stick till she drops. God, Ingraham, it's hard to lose her.

"It's her being there makes me suspicious, maybe — Littman says so — laughed at the idea that Otto was working for anybody but America. But I don't know, Ingraham — I don't know. I ought not to have thrown him out, maybe, but I didn't like it. Sweden! That means Germany, and Otto Littman knows it, or — it means tying up the plant if they can't ship.

"Another thing I'm telling you this for — it ain't natural the feeling in the town against selling munitions to the Allies should be so strong as it is. It would have died out long ago if somebody from outside wasn't stirring it up. There are more pacifists around town than is normal, more in the factory and even in the wire plant. Don't seem to go deep enough to make 'em give up their jobs — just talk, and there must be somebody behind it. I'm making allowance for those that's honestly against it, those that think not believing in war will make a difference. Couldn't stop an earthquake that way, and that's what this war is, Ingraham

— earthquake — convulsion. Guess men have 'em — burst their bonds like the earth its crust. Guess we won't end them until we put more give into the bonds — make 'em more elastic. That's the way I see it. Hope you won't mind my disturbing you. Had to get it off my mind."

Dick had listened in amazed silence through the talk. He reached out his hand, deeply moved. "Disturb me, Mr. Cowder? I think your confidence an honor, and I don't think your suspicion idle. On the contrary, I agree with you that the feeling against munition making here isn't normal, but I take it that we must expect propaganda. I don't like the secrecy of it, if it is propaganda. As for Littman, I often talk with him. He's quite openly for Germany. He has lived there as a student, you know. He has caught the faith that consumes Germany and is driving her now — her faith that her destiny is to rule the earth by virtue of her superior ability, knowledge, strength. It's not easy for young men of Otto's type to resist. Whether he is being used as a tool consciously or unconsciously, I cannot say. It would be quite in keeping with Germany's practice to stir up trouble here with England if she could. She naturally wants to take our minds off Belgium — to build back fires. I am not sure but the feeling growing in the country against Mexico — the fear of Japan — is largely German propaganda. And Otto may be helping it on, not out of disloyalty to the United States but because his German advisers — if he has them — have made him believe that the country is threatened in these directions. It was Otto, you remember, who brought that lecturer here a few weeks ago to warn us about a Mexican-Japanese alliance. It might have happened naturally enough, to be sure. But if pro-German citizens are introducing such lecturers into quiet towns like ours, all over the land, I should

feel it was distinctly a disloyal act. I don't know that they are, though it's sure the lecture we heard and the maps we saw had been used before — frequently I should say."

"I don't think it worried anybody," said Cowder, dryly.

"I rather think it would be difficult to make Sabinsport nervous over a Mexican-Japanese attack," laughed Dick. "It was evident the audience regarded it as a fairy tale."

"It's nothing else as far as I can see."

"There you are," said Dick. "I think we can afford to wait awhile. After all, Otto and his friend would not be guilty of treason in making a contract with you for munitions for Germany. You have the same right to sell to her as to England. I'm glad you won't do it — but you would be breaking no law — you would be strictly within neutral rights."

Cowder glowered at him. "I'm no damned reformer," he said, "but I never yet helped a burglar to tools or a murderer to a gun."

"Good," said Dick, "and believe me, I'll keep an eye on Otto for you. He may be helping Germany now, but I shall be very much surprised if the time comes when we go into the war if he doesn't fall in line — unless he goes too far now."

"You believe we will go in?"

"Surely — some day."

"You don't believe the time has come?"

"No — no. I can't say I do."

Cowder sighed. "I don't know what to think, Ingraham. I wish to God I could make up my mind. I'd feel easier if we were in, but I don't see any use dragging in a country that don't see it. Why, Sabinsport is living on the war and don't know it. Don't see that you can't live in this country to-day except on

the war. But she does take an interest. Ever notice that South Side Alley over next the wire mill, where the kids play. Got trenches there that wouldn't be bad in Flanders. Wonderful how things spread in the world. Good night, Ingraham, and thank you."

Long after the man was gone Dick sat watching his fire. What a grief the man carried! To have a daughter like that and in Serbia; to believe he would never see her and yet to go on day in and day out — "Nancy Cowder" — nice name and she knew Lady Betty. Serbia! What was the latest news from Serbia? — he'd seen something in the *London Times* lately about the English nurses there. He'd look it up. What part of Serbia? He hadn't asked. He would — maybe he had been there. Not much chance if she was in the way of the Bulgars. Still, women like Nancy Cowder somehow imposed themselves. She'd not be afraid of all the armies and all the kings. "So slight and fine and free-moving," that was her father's description — "talking to jockeys and breeders and bookmen and not seeing them, only the horse." "Thoroughbred — that girl." What a different impression he had formed of her from Sabinsport gossip! He had not realized it before but he had in his mind a strapping big girl with a stride like a man's, a girl with clear gray eyes and a hearty laugh.

He rose and looked over the *Times* for the article from Serbia. To think that a girl could give her life and he must sit here quiet by his fire. He laughed aloud in bitter self-contempt.

The next day when Dick paid his usual late afternoon visit to the *Argus* office, he went over the talk he had had with Cowder, giving in detail the report of the quarrel with Otto and his own version. To his surprise, Ralph said nothing in defense of Otto.

"He isn't neutral. He is for Germany, just as

Patsy and you are for the Allies. Nobody in Sabinsport is really neutral as far as I can make out. This town is almost solidly against Germany, and you know it. The opposition is to our having anything to do with the infernal business. Sabinsport doesn't believe in war or doesn't believe in this war for us, and that's where I am — now. I'm for the people. We're trying to keep neutral and trying to see both sides. But I'm sick of it — beastly business — think of Cowder and Littman quarreling. Another war casualty," he said, bitterly, "suspicion, broken friendships — a world thrown back and all its hopes of making it a place fit for men to live in destroyed. Everything we've been trying to do the last twenty years gone to pot. There won't be a law protecting labor left in the country if this goes on. Who's going to think about hours and wages and safety and social insurance with that thing going on over there? Who cares any more in Sabinsport whether it's right or wrong to let two men gobble up the franchises? Who asks, now that we are beginning to make money and have good prospects of continuing as long as there's a war, whether it's right to turn a town into a mill for destruction? I'm sick of it, Dick. It's ruining things for us all. I'm so sore I can't bear to go anywhere any more, and if I do I always have a row with somebody. Went to Tom Sabins' last night and Patsy was there. We both tried to patch it up, but somebody said something about the freedom of the seas and I said I couldn't see why a German embargo was any more reprehensible than an English one, and Patsy went up like a rocket and said I wasn't human — had no sympathy — that if I'd seen Belgium as she did — she's just Belgium mad. Of course, like a fool, I said that there was always plenty of a suffering near at hand, and people of real human sympathy, not mere emotionalism, could see it. I was

a brute. I know Patsy is right. She left the room, and I didn't see her again, and Tom said she cried.

"And you, Dick — the war's got you. You needn't think I don't realize how it's hurting you to have to stay here. I know you'd give your life to go. Nothing makes me so sore as to see you standing up so gamely to your sentence, and all the time I can't see how you feel like you do. I can't get it as a thing for me, Dick. It isn't that I am all obstinate — won't see it — as you think. I can't see why it's up to us to go crazy because a good part of the world is crazy, but, honest to God, Dick, I'm beginning to wish I could. I can't follow Otto — nor Patsy, nor the Socialists at the mill — I don't seem to agree with anybody — and what I want is to be with you —"

"And Patsy," smiled Dick.

"I wonder," said Ralph inadvertently, "if Patsy has heard from that Henry Laurence she wrote so much about?"

"She hears from Mrs. Laurence, but not at all from Henry, I think, Ralph. Why? —"

"Oh, nothing," he said, suddenly cheerful, then added, sagely, "Such an experience as they went through together would naturally draw two young people together."

CHAPTER IV

DICK was coming in from a five days' walking trip. He had fled from town on Monday, seeking what the road and the sweet early May air and greenery would do for his jumping nerves and tormented mind. "Forget the war," counseled Ralph, when he telephoned he was off. He had done it fairly well. Spring is a lovely thing in the highlands around Sabinsport. It covers the earth with delicate blossoms, turns the brown tracery of the trees to soft yellows and reds and greens, peoples the air with songsters. It was early this year, and had opened the doors of the farmhouses — started gardens, set men to plowing fields, women to sewing on the porches, children to wandering in the woods. Dick walked without other compass than his own experienced sense of direction and distance, shunning highways, following lanes and little-used roads, stopping only when the day grew dusky and sleeping by preference in friendly farmhouses.

It was Saturday morning, warm, brilliant, fragrant. He would be in Sabinsport by noon, he calculated. How changed he was! How rested! How bright things seemed again! It would be good to get back. He believed he could preach to-morrow. It should be of the healing of the air and the sun.

It was ten o'clock when he struck Jo's Mills, as it was called — a tiny settlement slightly up a hill from the point where a gray old mill stood on the edge of a stream which took a long tumble here. There were a half dozen, comfortable, old-time, white houses on the street, with apple-trees and lilacs and gardens. There was a big general store — relic of early days when things were busy — only half occupied now — a church

— a school — a post-office in the wing of Miss Sally Black's house — a neat, prim post-office where nobody warmed his back long — though Miss Sally was not above keeping everybody long enough to feel out the news. There was a public telephone in the post-office, and over this it was the custom of the Sabinsport operators to communicate to Miss Sally anything particularly important. It was evident to Dick as he approached that Miss Sally must have received something that the neighbors were interested in, for there was a little group standing around, looking rather glum. He stopped and quite instinctively inquired, "What's the news?"

"Well," said one of the men — "it don't sound good to me — mebbe 'tain't so — they say the Germans have sunk a ship — a big one with a lot of Americans and women and children — didn't give no notice — nothing — just sunk 'em."

"Well — what I say is," said another, "that ain't likely. How could a submarine do that — sink a ship like that? — she'd have to blow up inside to sink so quickly. Likely her engine exploded."

Dick didn't stop to debate the power of the submarine, but quickly stepped in and called Ralph at the *Argus* office in Sabinsport.

"Hello, Ralph," he said. "I've just walked into Jo's Mills. There's an ugly report here of the sinking of a vessel with big loss of Americans — anything in it?"

"Everything in it, the *Lusitania* was torpedoed yesterday — she sank in a few minutes. There is a loss of twelve hundred lives reported, one hundred of them Americans."

"My God!" exclaimed Dick.

"Yes," replied Ralph, savagely, "my God!" and both men hung up.

It was but five miles into Sabinsport, but Dick always thought of it as the longest and blackest five miles he ever walked. As one drew nearer the town, the valley and the river unfolded, giving glimpses of rare loveliness, but they were lost on him now, though he had been looking forward to them all the morning as a delightful finish to his tramp. The tormented world was again on his back — his mind was grappling with the awful possibilities in the news. This was no ordinary casualty of war — not a battle lost or won. This was not war, as war was understood. It was a new factor in the awful problem. It was something quite outside the code — a deliberate effort to scare the neutral world into giving up the sea code it had been working out with such pain through the ages — scaring them into admitting that atrocities it thought it had done away with were legitimate if you invented an engine of destruction which couldn't be used unless you abandoned the laws. It was a defiance not only of all codes, but a most impudent defiance of the stern warning of the United States. Dick's blood ran hot and furious as he thought of it. "It can't be passed. It means action. They'll have to retreat — or we'll have to fight — and they'll never retreat. It would be giving up half of what they think their strength," he said, with the conviction of one who knew his Germany — its confidence in itself, its contempt for non-military peoples, its sneering at all laws or practices that stood in the way of its will.

"But who, who in Sabinsport sees this as it is? How are they to be made to see it? Half the town will treat the *Lusitania* as a tragedy like the *Titanic*. Captain Billy will rave and say, 'If we had protested — if we hadn't a Democratic administration.' But that isn't seeing the issue — his kind of fury against the Germans misses the point — the inner meaning

which the country must see if it ever goes whole-heartedly in. Wanton piracy — as savage and unmerciful as the Wotan they worship. God! if I could get into it. But here I stay. I will go home — bathe — dress — read my mail — prepare for services to-morrow — go through them. I'll sleep and eat and write and smile and talk as if this fearful thing was not on the earth — as if I didn't know that every day brought it closer to Sabinsport — and she doesn't know it. Ralph's right — it's closing in on us. And what will Ralph say, I wonder."

What Ralph said was in that evening's *Argus*. It was brief.

"When men go to war the appeal is to violence, destruction, death. He who can destroy most, kill most, is the superior. You take what comes in your path. To talk of laws of war is nonsense. To talk of mercy in war is to talk hypocrisy. You're out to kill. You kill what's in your way. To debate your right to do what will injure an enemy is not the way of war. It is the way of peace. The destruction of the *Lusitania* was an act of war — that hideous, senseless thing to which Europe has appealed. It is a tragedy that Americans should have been destroyed. It is a greater tragedy that they should have put themselves deliberately in the path of death. If they had as deliberately walked between the firing lines in battle, would we have condemned the combatants if they lost their lives?"

Dick bowed his head at the merciless logic of the paragraph, its contempt for humanity as it is, its lofty and reckless egotism. He was encouraged, however, when he learned afterwards that when Otto had congratulated Ralph on the editorial, Ralph had said: "But you miss *my* point, Otto. I'm not defending

your infernal country. It was cowardly business, but it was logical. You Germans are in a fair way to demonstrate the silliness of trying to insist on honor in war. Laws of war are about as reasonable as laws against tornadoes. The only hope I have is that you'll reduce the beastly business to its absurdity."

The effect of the *Lusitania* on Sabinsport was much deeper and more general than Dick had dared dream. For the first time since the war began he sensed a feeling of personal responsibility abroad — in the banks, at the grocery, on the street, around the dinner tables. There was a growing consciousness that this was something which did concern her, something that she must see through. There were a few, but only a few in the town, who insisted that we should plunge in immediately and avenge the outrage. Sabinsport was not ready to do that. The world was full of wrongs calling for vengeance, was the *Lusitania* the one out of all these many where Sabinsport must act? The town reeked with discussion. Dick found indignation, however, qualified strongly by the suspicion that the *Lusitania* was armed. The doubt was a hang-over from her inherited mistrust of English ways and English dealings. "Probably was carrying munitions," men would say. "Probably did have guns."

Then, too, Sabinsport found it hard to believe that it was necessary, and therefore right, for Americans to go to Europe during the war, unless they went to enlist or on errands of mercy. You see, Sabinsport's idea of business was limited, provincial. She had never quite grasped the fact that men ran back and forth to London and Paris and Berlin now-a-days on legitimate business quite as freely as a few of her own citizens ran back and forth to New York. Going to Europe was still an adventure. There had been a time when Sabinsport numbered so few people that had been to Europe

that she had formed a society, "The Social Club of Those Who Have Been to Europe." It had not lasted long, for she had a sense of humor which saved her from keeping alive that which savored of snobbery, and the Social Club of Those Who Have Been to Europe died a quiet and early death. Going abroad was now common enough, but it had not yet assumed the proportions of legitimate business.

In spite of all this, however, there was not from the first a doubt in Sabinsport's mind, if you got down to the bottom of it, that whatever laws there were must be observed; whatever rights we had must be defended. Here she followed Captain Billy, who said, "By the Jumping Jehosophat, we'll go where we have a right to." One would have thought, to hear Captain Billy, that he made at least two trips across the ocean a year, though, as a matter of fact, he had never laid his eyes on that water.

"Do you suppose, if my business calls me to London," said he, "and that the laws allow me, an American citizen, to travel on an English vessel that I'm going to keep off that ship? It has a legal right to carry me. Of course they can come aboard and see if that ship has contraband and guns, and if they find them they can take me off; but they can't blow her up until they have me safe. That's all they can do under the law, and that they have got to do. I'm going to travel wherever the law says I may."

Thus Captain Billy put it at the War Board, in his grocery, and even at home, where Mrs. Captain Billy, who always took him literally, said, with a flutter, "William, you must keep off those ships, even if you have the right to go on them. You will only make trouble if you insist on going to London now."

And in this insistence there were others in Sabinsport who agreed with Mrs. Captain Billy. There was the

Rev. Mr. Pepper, as I have already explained. There was the dwindling Peace Party. There was a small number of Socialists in the mills. But they made only a ripple on the surface of that staid, settled conviction in Sabinsport's mind—"where we have a right to go, we're going to go, and Germany shall not stop us."

It was this conviction, so strong in Sabinsport, that made her pick out of the President's diplomatic correspondence two words, and all through the discussion cling to them. He had said "strict accountability" at the start, Sabinsport agreed, and she was willing to wait and stand on that. "Fine"—"Just right"—"Don't give 'em a loophole," was the average opinion. Of course there were those in Sabinsport, though they were very few, that were, like Mr. Kinney, the pillar in Dick's church, who had found Belgium's resistance "impractical," and who now argued that the trouble with the President's correspondence was that it did not give us "a leg to run on." "We don't want war," said Vestryman Kinney. "Diplomacy consists in so framing your notes that you have a way out. Suppose Germany won't agree, we must back down. It looks bad to me. He ought to have been more skillful."

In all this discussion, however, Dick saw that ingrained deeply in Sabinsport was the idea that keeping peace was a preëminent national duty. He found in the heart of the town a solemn conviction that a country ought to have a machinery that would keep its people out of war, that when things went wrong with other nations there ought to be a way to settle them without fighting. Although he felt that anger over the *Lusitania*—and perhaps something more serious for Germany than anger, that was contempt for the act—stayed and increased in the town, he knew that she clung to the conviction that there ought to be a better

way than force to settle it. Sabinsport felt and argued very much as she felt and argued about the attempts in a neighboring State where lynchings sometimes occurred — that the punishment should be left to the law and not to a mob. To rush in now, as Captain Billy demanded, seemed to Sabinsport a little bit like mob action. She wanted a government that had a machinery to take care of such a task as this without forcing her to leave her honest business of earning a living to take up the abominable business of destroying men. She had an idea that we had a machinery for just this purpose. The question was, Would it work?

And so the town waited on events. She went about her business of feeding and clothing herself, but her ears were open, and if her mouth was shut her mind was at work, turning over the mighty and unaccustomed problems. Sabinsport was learning new words, struggling with strange ideas, trying to grasp their relation to herself. Did these things concern her and her business? If so, all right; but if not, well, she'd been trained not to interfere; and, above all, not to interfere in wars across the seas.

Of all the 20,000 people in Sabinsport, only one was aroused to immediate action by the *Lusitania*. A week from the morning that he had heard the dire news at Jo's Mills, Dick came down to his breakfast to find his husky, cheerful, Irish Katie with swollen eyes and tragic mien.

"Why, Katie!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter? What's Mikey been doing now?" He took it for granted it was Mikey. He had never known anything else to reduce Katie to tears.

"Oh, my God!" wailed the woman, "he's gone — gone to the war — says he's gone for you. You never sent him away from me, Mr. Dick, and never said a

word to me. You haven't a heart that hard. You couldn't do a thing like that."

"I certainly wouldn't do such a thing, Katie. I haven't sent Mikey away. I don't understand it. Tell me what's happened — that's a good soul." But all that Katie could find words to say was: "Read that — and that to me, his own mother."

Dick took the crumpled, tear-stained letter and read:

"Dear Mother:

"I'm going to war. They'll take me in Canada. You tell Mr. Dick to stop worrying because he can't fight. I'll do his fightin' and don't you go off your head. I can't stick around Sabinsport any longer with such things doin' in the world. The Dutchmen are off their bases — they've got to get back where they belong.

"I'd said good-by but I knew you'd make a row.

"Your loving son,

"MIKEY FLAHERTY."

"I didn't know this, Katie. Mike never had dropped a word to me that would make me suspect he was thinking of this. I don't understand what he means by going for me."

"I knew it, the spalpeen. I knew you'd never treat poor old Katie like this. I understand it well enough, now. It's him spilin' for the fight. It's my own fault. Didn't I tell him you was eatin' your heart out because you can't go, and he has been talkin' a lot of late about what you had been sayin' at the Club. Every night when he came home, it was Mr. Dick said this, and Mr. Dick said that. Silly old fool, I am. And him that would rather fight than eat and that sets the world by you, Mr. Dick."

"But, Katie, what put that nonsense into your head?"

"Oh," said the woman, sagely, "I know. I know it like I wuz your mother. You don't have to tell me things. I know you like I do the weather. You ain't been the same since the dirty Germans did up poor little Belgium. I know the only reason you don't go is that you wouldn't live a day."

"Nonsense, Katie. Where'd you get that?"

"Mikey told me. He was that cut up because you couldn't go, but he needn't have run away from his poor old mother like this. I'd let him go for you. I'm no coward. It ain't his goin'; it's his thinkin' I wouldn't let him. He's always beatin' up somebody — might as well be Germans. God pity 'em when Mikey gets there. He'll wipe up the road with 'em. And don't you be worryin', Mr. Dick. I'll stand it. He can write me, can't he?"

"Katie, I won't allow this. Mikey must come back. I'll go to Canada and have a search made for him. I have friends who'll find him."

"Indade and you won't do anything of the kind. Would you break the by's heart — and me that proud of him? Where's the other by in Sabinsport that had the right to get up and go? Let him fight. I'll live to see him with the stripe on his sleeve — as grand as the grandest. You'll not raise a finger. Drink your coffee now, and don't mind me, old fool that I am to be makin' you worry for a little thing like that."

And so Dick, with one eye on Katie's furtive wiping of her eyes, drank his coffee, wondering as he did it at the amazing intuition that affection gives. Katie and Mikey had discerned — so he told himself — what nobody in Sabinsport but Ralph knew, and he had said enough to Ralph to explain his understanding. What

was it that ran from soul to soul and opened to the unlettered what was closed to the most highly trained, he asked himself. But they are Irish, and the Irish have a sixth sense — one that looks into hearts.

But it was not divination, it was simply the keen and affectionate eye of Katie on him through all those terrible August and September days at the beginning. She saw what Dick did not realize, the beaten stoop to his shoulder, the despairing look in his eye when he came back from his effort to enlist. Many was the night during the days of that first approach to Paris that Katie had gone home to tell Mikey, "He's dyin' of grief, he is. He looks at his paper in the morning and drops his head in his hands and groans. He don't eat and he don't talk. The big battle is killin' him. I peeps in now and then to his study and he is sittin' lifeless like, thinkin' and thinkin'. Mikey, he's dyin' for love of France, could you beat it?"

And Mikey, much perplexed, watched his hero and took excruciating pains to keep the brakes on himself, not to do anything to worry Mr. Dick. When the battle was over and the Germans turned back, Dick's joy was so great that Katie herself began to rejoice. For Katie Flaherty, the war dated from that first week of September, 1914. Also from then dated what was to become the dominating passion of her life — her hatred of Germany.

Mikey's sudden departure was quickly known in Sabinsport, and Katie did not hesitate to make the most of the fact that he had gone for love of Mr. Dick. It had its romantic value, that runaway. It made Katie a town heroine. Certain well-to-do gentlemen in the banks, Cowder and Mulligan among them, sent her a purse. There was much talking to her in the streets as she did Dick's marketing, and nightly on the

porch of the little house on the south bank of the river where she lived a group of friendly neighbors came in to cry or to exult according to Katie's humor.

Dick was not long in sensing that Mikey's action was making opinion in Sabinsport, much as Patsy's adventures in Belgium had done. The very children caught it, and Richard Cowder stopped more than once in his favorite South Side Alley to discuss with the "gang" what the runaway was probably doing at the moment. In reporting his conversations, he sometimes would shake his head, saying, "You know these youngsters are getting a new idea about running away — that it may be a glorious deed."

The point at which the effect was most significant, in Dick's judgment, was the wire mill. Practically all of the boys in the South Side Club belonged there. They were friends and companions of Mikey. His going away had sobered them and made them far and away more interested in the war. The most significant effect was the way in which they cooled toward a movement which had begun to make strong headway in the factories and mills, a movement in which Ralph was taking keen interest as he saw in it a possibility of reviving the opposition to munition making which had been destroyed by Cowder's and Mulligan's appeal to the mill. This movement was already beginning to crystallize into a new party, made up of workmen and farmers. It was called Labor's National Peace Council. Nobody could tell just who started it in the mill, but Ralph had seized the idea and was working seriously for it.

"Where in hell did it come from?" Cowder asked Dick. "Not out of this town, I tell you, Ingraham. I know this town like a book. There's no Labor Peace Council in it when there's plenty of work. This scheme's been sneaked in from outside, and it's being

fed on the sly. What I can't make out is, Who's doing it? It's the same crowd that kept up the battle against munitions. I don't believe it's Otto. I'm watching him. It's somebody in the plants."

Dick had his notions. They were connected with an investigation he had been making on the quiet. His curiosity about where the boys in his club got the arguments they presented against munition making and selling had led him to look into the journals they read, particularly the foreign journals — Slovak, Bohemian, Italian, Polish. He discovered that they were all carrying a surprisingly similar series of articles, protesting on the highest moral grounds against the dragging of the workmen into such a business — making munition, forcing them to earn their bread by preparing destruction for their fellows, or going without it. He didn't like it and spoke to Ralph, translating to him the selections that he had put his hands on.

"It's the same hand that does this, Ralph; what do you think?"

"Why," said Ralph, "I've had that stuff offered me. I know all about it. There's a bunch of peace-makers in the East who are syndicating it, in the domestic as well as the foreign press, paying all the expenses. They say it's their contribution to the cause. The agent offered it to me here. They would not give me the names of the philanthropists. I told the agent that I didn't advertise justice, I advocated it. But, Dick, it's all right. They're just silly, mistaken in their way of getting at it. You cannot carry on advertising of this kind in this country but people get onto the source of it very soon, just as you have; and that puts an end to it. I told the man that offered me that stuff that would be the way of it."

"Did Otto ever mention this to you, Ralph?"

Ralph studied. "I believe he did once — asked me

if I had ever heard of the scheme — if it had ever been offered to me. He said a newspaper friend of his in New York spoke to him about it. I told him what I've told you: that people who believed in these notions and wanted to get them over should come into the open with them. I don't take any stock in pacifists that don't work in the open."

Dick told Cowder all he knew.

"Proves nothing," he said, "but I don't like it."

"Nor I," said Dick.

When Labor's National Peace Council began to flourish, Dick couldn't get it out of his head that there was a connection between the two, that the humanitarian advertisers were the backers of the movement. He went to Ralph with the suggestion. That young man had thrown himself boldly into the campaign and he resented Dick's idea that there was something suspicious behind it.

"I don't believe it," he declared hotly. "It's the natural thing for people who work, and only want to do useful, honest work, to revolt against this kind of thing. This is a spontaneous labor movement, I tell you, Dick. Our working people and our farmers don't believe in playing with fire — when the fire means war. They know this selling to the Allies what the Allies wouldn't otherwise have is going to exasperate Germany and may drag us in. I tell you it's perfectly natural they should rise and protest and prepare to fight it out at the elections."

"But, Ralph, who started this thing here? Where did it come from? The shops?"

"Hanged if I know — started itself, I tell you. I don't care — it's the ideas. They're sound. I'm for them."

"But if these ideas were being scattered and watered by the paid agents of Germany, how would you feel

about it? You must know by this time that Germany has no sympathy for peace; that she believes in war. You must realize that she has no objection to selling munitions herself. Why, half the world gets its big guns from her. It's because she hopes to trap us into being unneutral—refusing for an illogical sentiment to sell her enemies munitions that she's working this thing up. It's part of her war program. Can't you see it, Ralph?"

"I tell you there's nothing in your suspicion. Look at the men who've been here to speak for the party—as good labor men as the Federation has. You can't suspect them of pro-Germanism; they're for peace, I tell you, and putting an end to this infernal shell and powder making."

Nor was it until Ralph had been in Washington to the famous August, 1915, meeting of the council and had himself heard the cynical reply of the precious rascal that was managing affairs, to the demand of honest working men for an explanation of the source of the funds that were being so lavishly used, "What if it is German money?"—that he yielded. "I've been a fool," he said to Dick quite frankly when he came back, and quite as frankly he told the story of his own connection with the party in the *Argus*.

"The editor of this paper has never concealed his opinion of war. He considers it a senseless and brutal method of trying to settle human differences. He considers the present war in Europe an unnecessary crime in which all the nations concerned are partners. This war has nothing to do with the United States, and the efforts to involve us, whether they come from within or without, are works of the devil. Nobody who reads the *Argus* can doubt that this has been our opinion from the start. Thinking this, we could only look on muni-

tion making in this country as deliberate trading with the devil. Big Business never stops to consider humanity when there's money to be made. The *Argus* has consistently fought the making and the selling of munitions. When a party arose which had this end, the *Argus* welcomed it, supported it. The *Argus* was a fool in doing this. Closer contact with the leaders of the party proved to the editor that a bunch of grafting Americans had persuaded a thick-headed German agent that if he'd give them money enough they'd swing this country away from England, via peace and brotherly love. This came out last week in Washington. We shook the dust of the town from our feet, as did every self-respecting farmer and laborer there, when we discovered it. The *Argus* is for peace, but it is not interested in pulling German chestnuts out of the fire. For whatever assistance it has given heretofore in that operation it apologizes to its readers and it assures them it was ignorance and not pro-Germanism which was behind its activities."

There was much discussion of the editorial over Sabinsport supper tables that evening.

Dick was still in his study when the telephone rang: "Is it you, Dick?" an excited voice called. "Have you seen Ralph's editorial? Isn't it splendid? Isn't it just like him, the honestest thing in the world. Just can't be dishonest — oh, Dick, do you think I might call him up and tell him so? He despises me so. But to know he isn't pro-German makes me so happy."

"Call him up, by all means, Patsy," — for it was Patsy, though she hadn't announced herself. "He'll be mighty pleased, I know."

And Patsy called, but Ralph was not to be found, and an hour later her courage waned. "Maybe Dick will tell him," and Dick did two or three days later,

but Ralph only grumbled, "She evidently didn't think enough of it to tell me so herself."

The editorial brought out an unusually full meeting of the War Board. Ralph came in and told them all about it, and Brutus, who had "known it all the time," hinted at revelations he'd soon be able to make. According to Brutus, this was a very insignificant activity of the German agents. He knew it to be a fact that they had vast stores of arms in New York, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Omaha, and that if the United States wasn't mighty careful what she did there would be an army of thousands of Germans shutting us in our houses while German fleets bombarded the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and Zeppelins rained fire on our roofs. To which Captain Billy swore agreement.

While the discussion went on at the War Board, another went on in a speeding car, driven by Otto Littman. Otto had gone out for a spin in his little roadster — a thing he often did on hot summer nights. Across the river on the hill at a dark corner he had slowed up a bit, just enough for a man to step on the running board and into the car. Katie Flaherty, going home from Dick's, said to herself: "The reckless creature! How did he know he was wanted? It's a queer thing he didn't stop. It's Otto Littman, I'm thinkin'."

It was indeed, and the lithe figure that had entered the running car was Max Dalberg, the "wonder of the laboratory," whom Reuben Cowder had mentioned to Dick in his first confidence of weeks before.

"Well, Littman," the newcomer said, with something like a sneer, "your young man on the *Argus* is mighty high in his tone to-night. What's up? Didn't they divvy in Washington?"

"None of that, Max. Ralph Gardner's not that kind. I don't know where you people get the idea that

all Americans can be bought. They can't be, and yet this whole business has been based on money. You know I never believed in this. I have been willing to put your case whenever I had the chance. I believe it's right. I'll work for Germany in any way I think honest, but I won't lie and I won't bribe."

"You can't put Germany's case fully in this country, young man, and you know it. The Americans are a set of sentimental fools. They're hypocrites, too. Talk about neutrality! The whole bunch is like Cowder. Pitch you out if you suggest selling munitions to even another neutral country. There isn't a score of manufacturers in this country that wouldn't rather close their plants than sell to us. Do you call that neutrality?"

"I tell you, Max, it's the people. You don't see things as they are at all — it's not the Government. The Government is not preventing the munition makers from selling to Germany. The trouble is these munition makers here won't sell to Germany."

"But what kind of a government is it that cannot control its people? Do you suppose our Kaiser would tolerate that kind of weakness? For the sake of the United States, Otto, you ought to help teach this people what a strong nation really is. If this country expects to live she must learn to obey — learn that masters are necessary. What's she doing now? — taking the bit in her teeth — thinking and doing what she pleases. She's elected a President to do her thinking and she won't follow him — forces him to do what his judgment is against."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, those notes. Wilson would never have written them if he hadn't been afraid of the people. He's too wise."

"You're wrong, Max. Wilson thinks just as Sabins-

port does and he's doing a thing the country will back up."

"They won't have a chance long. Germany's patience is failing. We'll attend to that. If they insist, they'll get — Otto, you know as well as I do that there won't be a plant left in this country soon to make munitions if they insist, and there won't be a vessel on the seas to carry them. We'll take care of that. You know we can do it. Why, there's not a factory in the States that our people are not in, and there's not a vessel out that we can't split. We're giving them a chance — appealing to their own fool sentiments. 'Love peace?' Well, take peace — don't love peace and talk hatred of Germany. 'Hate money made from munitions?' Well, that's easy; don't make 'em. We're only giving them their own dope, Otto, and they refuse to stand by their own faith. Hypocrites! English! If they won't take a Labor's Peace Council, you can be sure they'll get a first-class explosion party — and that right soon."

"See here, Max, I can't follow anything like that. I'm willing to educate my country, but I won't revenge her because she refuses my teaching. Cut it out."

The ruddy blond face of Otto Littman's companion wore usually the gentlest of smiles — the few who had ever met him in Sabinsport thought him a harmless man, devoted to his laboratory — talking little, playing his piano often late after a busy day's hard work, friendly to little children, troubling nobody. "Never had a better man," said Cowder, who almost daily visited the laboratory and listened to his explanations of difficulties both physical and chemical and how they could be overcome — watched his ingenious experiments, discussed long with him future developments.

"German parentage — born here," he had told

Cowder. He never talked of the war more than to to say sadly, "It's bad business."

Cowder and the children who ran to him on the street at night would not have recognized him now as he leaned over Otto Littman — his blue eyes glittering like steel points, his lips drawn back until two full rows of white teeth showed — they would not have known the voice with its hateful sneer.

"Too late, Otto. You're in. You can't get out. Do you suppose we are going to let as good and prosperous an agent as you are, with a father above all suspicion, go when we've got him? We've got you, Otto Littman, and you'll do what the High Command orders. Come, come, boy, don't be an ass. And remember where your interests are. This country is doomed if she doesn't soon see where her advantage lies. You're made, whatever happens, for His Majesty never forgets. Your name is on his books."

Otto Littman made no reply, but, swinging his car around sharply, drove rapidly back, only slowing up as he approached the dusky turn where his passenger had stepped in. He stepped out now as skillfully, and the car went on. One hearing it pass would have been quite willing to swear that it had not stopped.

"Poor fool," Max said to himself. "Thought he could mix in great affairs and pull out at will. That's your American education for you — willing to blurt into anything that's new and promises excitement, pulling out the instant it gets dangerous or pinches their cheap little notions of morality. *Gott in Himmel!* what does he expect? — that Germany will tolerate such nonsense from any country on the globe? Our time has come and they must learn to understand what valor and power mean in the world."

He took out his pipe and lit it and strolled, softly humming, into the rooms he occupied; they made up

the second story at Kate Flaherty's. It was a convenient arrangement for a single man who liked to come and go according "to things at the plant." The little frame house was built like many on the South Side, into the hill; its first story opened on one level, its second on another a street above. Max had this second floor to himself now that Mike had flown. He had said to Mrs. Flaherty that he'd be glad to take both rooms, his books and papers having outgrown the one. He had made it very pleasant and convenient — wonderfully convenient for a gentleman who occasionally had late callers and preferred they should not be seen coming or going.

Poor Otto reached home in a very different state of mind. The exciting game he had been playing for months now with a proud conviction that he was indeed on the inside, an actor in world affairs, a man trusted by great diplomats and certain one day to be recognized as one of those that had helped hold the United States when she was on the verge of losing herself to England — the game had taken a new turn. It was out of his hands. He was no longer the player — he was the puppet. What could he do? Was it true they "had" him?

Otto Littman was one of not a few prosperous young German-Americans who were caught in 1914, 1915, and 1916 in the coarse and rather clumsy web that German intrigue spun over spots in this land. Otto's trapping had begun at least half a dozen years before, when he had made his first visit to Germany. He was then twenty-four, a handsome, rather arrogant, excellently educated young man. Rupert Littman had done his best for his only son. He himself was the best of men. He had come here in the early fifties — a lad of ten or twelve, with his father, a refugee of the revolution of 1848. They had found their way to

Cincinnati and finally to a farm near Sabinsport. The land had thrived under the elder Littman's intelligent and friendly touch. He was a prosperous man when the opening of the coal vein under his farm made him rich. He came into Sabinsport and with others, made rich like himself, started a farmers' bank. This bank Rupert had inherited, and it was to carry it on that he had educated Otto, sending him to Germany to the family he had not seen since childhood but with which he had always had a formal relation, with the understanding that he was to spend at least two years in studying German banking and commercial methods.

The two years had lengthened to six, for Otto had been well received by his relatives. An opening had been found for him in Berlin where he had been given the opportunities his father sought for him. He had been cultivated by serious and older people, and always his relatives had lost no opportunity of impressing upon him the honors that were done him, of telling him that he was being taken in even as they were not. Otto had been flattered, though not so deeply as his relatives felt that he should have been. He had not taken the attentions and opportunities with an especial seriousness. There was a considerable percentage of inner conviction that they were his due, that there must be qualities in him that the attentive had detected which were not in others. Being an American meant something in Germany, he saw; also he soon discovered that there were two classes of his compatriots that Berlin cultivated — the millionaires and the professors. It is doubtful if Otto realized how very cunning this was on the part of Berlin. She had chosen the two classes of the United States most susceptible to flattery, and best placed to serve her purpose. And, how our millionaires and our professors had played her game!

It was not so much what was done for him and for

other Americans in Berlin that impressed Otto. It was the country itself — the brightness and neatness of things captivated him. He liked its little gardens with every inch under immaculate cultivation — its tidy forests where the very twigs were saved — its people fitted into their particular niches like so many well-arranged books on a shelf. He liked the sense of men and women being looked after, kept in health, kept in employment, the utmost made out of them — no more letting a bit of human material go to waste than a bit of iron.

Their ways of doing things in business pleased him. There was always somebody that knew everything to be known about a particular thing. There were experts for every feature of the banking business. It was not an inherited rule-of-thumb way of carrying on things, such as he was familiar with at home; it was a thoroughly considered, scientific practice. To be sure, it seemed ponderous to him, but he felt as if it were sure. It had been thought out. Science — science in everything — nothing left to chance — no reliance on luck. He began to take the banking business very seriously indeed, to feel that he could carry home something important and serve not only Sabinsport but the country at large, which at that moment was wallowing in a terrible banking muddle over which his German friends held up their hands in shocked amazement.

As time went on, Otto began to take other things more seriously, and gradually there crept over him a sense of something stupendous going on in men's thoughts and souls. People were not living for the present in Germany as at home; they were not accepting their place in the world as something fixed; they seemed always to have before them the future, and that future on which their eyes were fixed was something of magnificent if dim proportions. It was something that

he finally discovered stirred them to the depths of their being.

"What ails them?" he asked himself, at first. "It is as if they saw things. It isn't natural." Slowly he began to understand what they saw, what they felt. It wasn't a dream; it was a faith that absorbed them — a faith in their own greatness and a conviction that they were soon to be called to prove it to the world, to take their proper place at the head of nations. "They're crazy," he told himself at first, "or I am." But later he began to see with them. Was it not the truth? What nation on earth equaled them — in effective action, in restraint, in fidelity, in valor, in brightness of vision? What other nation was worthy to rule the earth? Certainly not England — she was soft, vain, selfish — her lands in the hands of a few, her people neglected, her government rent by dissensions, her colonies self-governing or ready for revolt. England certainly had lost her sense and her genius for empire.

Not France. France had no dream of empire, no genius for empire; she was content to stay at home. She preferred making things with her hands to making them with machines. She let her people think what they would, say what they would. France had every fault of that futile, impossible thing men called democracy. Certainly not France.

He saw it clearly, finally, as a thing writ on the walls of heaven. The destiny of Germany was to rule the earth. It was right and inevitable that she should do it because she was superior. It was part of her greatness that she saw her destiny, did not shrink from it, dared openly to prepare for it, to educate her people for it.

Her daring thrilled Otto to the very soul. He read Treitschke finally. Her text book. He saw in it a

notice to the earth that her master was here, to prepare to receive him. It was an open notice to England, to France, to make way. The conqueror was coming. He did not come in the night. He taught in the open of his approach — marshaled his armies in the open — built his ships in the open.

Otto began to feel an overwhelming contempt for the rest of Europe — that it should not understand what was writ so large before its eyes, that it should touch shoulders with a nation that for years had carried in its heart so wondrous and magnificent an ambition, that had so consistently and frankly prepared to make it real. Time they were put in their place — particularly the two, France and England, that called themselves the best the world has done so far. They were at the end of their string.

His conversion was no half-hearted affair. Like alien converts the world over, he outdid the Germans in the ardor of his faith, in his contempt of opposition, and he felt all this without an instant of waning in loyalty to his own country. As a matter of fact the relations of the United States never entered his mind. The United States had nothing to do with this. Germany had no thought of her. Germany admitted our claim to the Western Hemisphere so far as Otto's experience went. Germany in South America, Germany in Mexico — of that he saw and knew nothing. His whole mind was aflame with the discovery he had made. It seemed to him like a return to the age of heroes, when men walked grandly and rose to place by great deeds of valor alone.

He had come back to the United States in 1912, but two years were not long enough even to dim the great conception he had caught. Indeed, everything in the country threw into higher relief the superiority of German methods and justified her faith in her destiny.

Sabinsport, after any one of the German towns of corresponding size, seemed ugly, unfinished, disorderly. To their trim, solid, spotless exterior was opposed a straggling, temporary, half-cleaned condition in at least the greater part of the town. Instead of a careful business management of town affairs, by men trained as they would have been for bank or factory, was an absurd political system of choosing men for offices. It was not the good of the town that was at issue, although both sides loudly claimed that it alone considered Sabinsport; it was always the party, with the result that clever men, like Mulligan and Cowder, practically controlled affairs.

Otto might, six years before, have laughed at this ridiculous method of running a town, but not now. Germany had taught him to be serious — oh, very serious, particularly in public matters. It shamed him that his home, the place where he must live and do business, should conduct itself in this crude and wasteful fashion.

He found it difficult in the bank. His "reforms" were disliked — his father, the directors, the men at the books and the windows, clung to their ways, and their ways were not, in his judgment, "scientific." His father laughed at his impatience. "You must go slow, Otto. What people won't willingly do because they see it is the better, cannot succeed. Perhaps we're not so bad as you think. Admit our results are good."

But Otto was convinced it was chance, the luck of the American, not any sound practice that had brought the bank where it stood. Then constantly there was an irritation in business, a resentment that they would not see and admit the superiority of the practices he would introduce.

The social life bored him, or rather the lack of it. There was no provision for daily natural mixing with

one's friends — no coffee hour, no beer garden, no music. He resented the indifference to the friendly side of life. He criticized resentfully the habit of regarding pleasure as something to be bought with money — the inability to get it without spending. Indeed, Otto felt a thorough and rather bitter disgust at the place money held in Sabinsport. She regarded it, he felt, as an end. Getting it was the chief thing with which men's minds were occupied. They seemed never to think of public affairs except in terms of business, and of very personal business, too.

But, in spite of this preoccupation with money-getting, they did not, after all, respect money. They flung it about, toyed with it, used it for uncertain schemes, wild ventures, took it for their costly and reckless pleasures. Rarely would you find a German treating money with such carelessness, such contempt. It would seem as if the thing everybody sought was not worth keeping when won. Otto hated this. A German knew the value of money — his countrymen did not. And the few who did and hoarded it, refused to risk it — they seemed to receive no such respect from the people as the open-handed. It was incomprehensible — the American and his money.

But that which combined to make life in Sabinsport most barren and flat to Otto was his feeling that there was no greatness, no sense of a magnificent and mysterious future coming to the country. The people were not working toward a definite national thing. Men and women seemed to think of nothing more magnificent than to gather and spend wealth. The idea of subordinating a personal aim for a national aim, the thing which so dignified German earning, saving and spending, was unheard of here. Here you lived for yourself, not for your nation.

"America is not a nation," he told his father; "it's

a place where great numbers of people, largely because of a happy chance which probably can never happen again in the world's history, exercise just enough control of themselves to enable them to live completely selfish lives and they save themselves any slight remorse they might feel for this selfishness by somehow convincing themselves that they are demonstrating the superiority of individual liberty. And what you are getting in America is an undisciplined, self-satisfied people, more and more incapable of thinking itself wrong, more and more incapable of wanting anything but to be let alone in smug comfort. It is not a nation, I tell you, Father," Otto would say. "A nation must have a single, glorious aim."

And the old man would wring his hands and say, "You don't understand, Otto." And sometimes, walking up and down, would repeat the story of the incident which had led Otto's grandfather to join the Revolution of 1848 and had brought the family finally to America.

It was not an unusual incident. He was a soldier in training, and one morning in drilling his gun slipped and came down as they stood at "Attention." The officer in charge sprang at him with a savage oath and cut him with his sword across the face so that the blood ran in streams over his uniform. Rupert Littman finished the drill and that evening joined the party of young revolutionists, suffered with them defeat, was imprisoned, escaped, and, as has been told, in 1850 came to this country.

"You don't understand, Otto. You look only at the outside. It's empire they think of over there; it's liberty here. An empire with an autocrat at the head, even a half-way one, may be orderly. Liberty is apt to look pretty untidy and mixed up in comparison, I

know, Otto. But don't make any mistake; a country that has set out like this one of ours to show that all men that come to its shores are free, that never for a moment has dreamed of ruling other peoples, asks nothing of newcomers but that they don't interfere with other people's freedom. Oh, that country may not look as trim on the outside as Germany, its people may not spend their money as sensibly — probably they don't; and I know we think a good deal more about our own affairs than about public affairs; but don't you get it into your head that we're not a nation and have no central enthusiasm. If it came to the test I imagine you would find that the right of every man to mind his own business and of every nation to do the same, would make a pretty strong tie in the United States. You would see, if it came to a test, that we have a core over here."

"Words, Father, words; you've talked this democratic patter so long you think it means something. A nation must have a visible expression of power to be great and feel great. She must have an army, a navy — that is what makes a nation feel great."

But Rupert Littman shook his head. "You don't understand, Otto, you don't understand." And Otto didn't understand, and Sabinsport continued to irritate and humiliate him.

The war coming when he was still in this mood aroused his enthusiasm. Now the world would have a demonstration of what greatness in a nation meant. They would see again on earth a real empire rise. So filled was Otto with this sense of the magnificence of German destiny, he felt no criticism for anything that Germany could do, no doubt of anything she said. If she invaded Belgium it was because France was already about to do so, and she beat her to it. If she burned

Louvain, it was for the unanswerable reasons that the Emperor himself condescended to give to the American people.

His exultation, naturally enough, made him resent the almost universal sympathy for heroic little Belgium. He resented the something like contempt for forcing the war — for all Sabinsport seemed to take it for granted that Germany had started it. What right, he asked himself hotly, have a lot of yokels like these — people who know nothing — nothing of the aspirations of a great nation, a nation with a genius for empire — people who can hardly name the countries of Europe and couldn't, for the life of them, tell where the Balkans are — what right have they to an opinion? He was outraged at the fact that everybody had an opinion and had no hesitation in giving it. The very barber and bootblack cursed at the Kaiser. Nothing better showed the way Otto had gone than the impulse he felt to have them both arrested. His only consolation in the town was Ralph, who did appreciate the social efficiency of Germany though he flatly denied any comprehension of what Otto meant when he talked of German destiny.

It was natural enough that Otto should have eagerly welcomed the opportunity to help turn public opinion in America against England and toward Germany, which came to him early in the fall of 1914. Germany was unquestionably troubled by the judgment against her. She saw that the United States held her responsible for starting the war and was horrified by her first stroke. This would never do. Agents were at once sent out to take advantage of every conceivable opportunity to make the American think as he ought about these things — that is, to think as Germany thought.

The country filled up with them. One who traveled

much in the fall and winter of 1914 and 1915 met them on the trains, in hotels — big, blond, mustached persons with the air of the superman. One of their objects was to enlist quietly the aid of German-American citizens of position and education who had seen enough of Germany to understand and sympathize with her aspirations. There were many of the second or third generations who had had experiences similar to Otto's, who felt as he did and who believed that in interpreting Germany to the United States they were serving their country.

Otto was one of the first of these young men approached. His vanity was deeply flattered. To be invited into great affairs, to be asked to help with a campaign important to the Empire, to serve his own land at the same time by helping to set her right — what an opening! He promised his full and loyal service. He asked only to be used.

The first service asked of him was to secure full information about the munition making in the district of which Sabinsport was an important point, and to place in every plant as many of the men which would be sent to him as he could without attracting attention. He easily and naturally enough carried out the commission, and he did it without compunction. It seemed plausible and proper enough to him that Germany should inform herself about the chances of the Allies supplying themselves with munitions, and he admired the care she took to get accurate information. So far as Otto was concerned, this was all there was in the matter.

The campaign against selling munitions, which was started in the winter and spring of 1915, tickled him enormously. Clever — what could be more clever than using this absurd obsession of a few pacifists to prevent her enemy from getting shells and shrapnel!

Germany stirring up sentiment against war-weapons to weaken her opponent! That was humor — great humor. And Otto went into the campaign with gusto, working quietly through the men he had placed in the plant at Sabinsport, particularly Max Dalberg; working through unseeing Ralph, working in a dozen towns where he had business and social relations. His attitude was strictly correct. We were neutral. Why should we preach neutrality and make for one antagonist what circumstances made it impossible to make for another? We must treat all alike. The campaign took hold. The workingmen favored it. Otto was greatly pleased. That much money was being used in sending around speakers, in circulating documents, in advertising, in establishing newspaper and periodical organs, he vaguely knew. It was all right. You must get the ear of the public. Why not?

The only serious rebuff Otto had in the early months of his propaganda was when he attempted to contract with Cowder and with other manufacturers for their output. He was amazed and incensed at their attitude. They treated the suggestion that they sell to "Sweden" as an insult. It was this attitude, so hostile to Germany, that had made him completely lose his control with Cowder. It had been unbearable; this contempt, this resentment at the suggestion. He had felt that he was defending Germany when he raised his hand. His controlled and adroit companion had criticized him severely, "You'll give the game away, Littman, if you lose your temper like that."

But Otto had replied hotly, "Give it away! It's a fair game. I believe in what I'm doing. It's war and fair enough. What I can't tolerate is the hypocrisy of the American attitude. To pretend to be neutral and act as if you were insulted when it is suggested to you that you sell something so it will get to

Germany as well as to England. To pretend to be neutral and to be concerned only with their rights, and yet tolerate with indifference England's violations and rage against Germany's."

"Well, they mustn't complain if we use stronger arguments. If they can't make good the neutrality they preach, we'll have to see what a little force will do."

"What do you mean?" asked Otto, sharply. "You can't force the United States."

"The hell we can't," was all his chief answered.

The reply had made no deep impression on Otto then. He remembered it now. He remembered how this hint had recurred as he talked with the German agents in the different places where he had met them. After the Washington fiasco, bursting completely the party for which he had labored so faithfully, this threat came back to him more often. It made him anxious. It was in the back of his mind when he flared at Max and brought upon his head the taunt that humiliated and alarmed him. What if they carried it out — these explosions that they threatened — how could he escape complicity? He could refuse to help, but what good would that do if he was accused. It was a very unhappy young diplomat that laid his head on the pillow that night — one thoroughly disillusioned with great affairs.

The succeeding months made him more unhappy. Sabinsport mistrusted him, and he was made to feel it. In the business life of the town where he had been treated with deference there was a withdrawal, hard to define but very real to Otto. Again and again when he entered an office or room men stopped talking. There was a restraint at the War Board — the one group in the town which had always listened with eagerness, whether to outlandish theories and gossip

or to sensible argument and unquestioned fact. Why should the War Board harbor suspicions of him? Did the War Board *care*?

Ralph, who had been his willing listener, was changed, it seemed to him. After the downfall of Labor's National Peace Council, he put the question bluntly to Otto: "Did you know that it was German money that was backing up the munition and pacifist campaign?" Otto hesitated. "Never mind," said Ralph, convinced, "but you must see that is a kind of thing not done, Otto. Embroiling us with England when we're trying to keep out of the scrap is the work of a sneak. You know why I threw the *Argus* to the party. It was because I believed it an honest American effort to combat militarism in the United States, to stop the making and selling of munitions. Do you suppose I would have taken any stock in a German effort to stop munition making here? It's a scream — Germany spending money in such a cause while she's using Belgium's guns and running her factories night and day making munitions! I'm with you in any frank effort to make people understand Germany better. I begin to think, Otto, that this business makes me understand Germany better than anything that has happened. You may be sure I'll look twice hereafter at things made-in-Germany, particularly ideas. I don't like this business, Otto, and I have to say so."

And Otto could find few words to defend the campaign — though he had been able to do it so volubly and confidently to himself.

But it was with his father that the great strain came — his father who was watching him with eyes in which love, agony and anger disputed place, and neither of them could speak. He might try, as he did, to cut off gradually all relations with the plotters, for now he called them so to himself. He might, as he did, see

more and more clearly that Germany was trying to embroil the United States with Mexico. He might feel that he could put his finger on the human cause of half the explosions in the country, but he dared not speak, for to speak would, he felt, throw him into the hands of the secret service with documentary evidence enough at least to cause his imprisonment — these letters of his, so full of admiration for the country which he realized every day now was steadily marching into war with his own country.

The war had brought to no one in Sabinsport so far as great humiliation and wretchedness as to this dabbler in world politics. No small part of his misery was due to his fear that the suspicion abroad in Sabinsport would find its way overseas to the one girl in the world for whom he had ever really cared. Would the intangible thing which followed him in the street find Nancy Cowder in Serbia and poison her loyal and honest mind against him? He had many reasons for knowing how candidly she weighed things. Would she be misled by gossip and the letters he'd been sending her, so full of his own importance in the great work of making America understand Germany? Would Nancy say, like Ralph, "All this does make me understand Germany better, Otto"? He had an awful fear of it. The only consolation was his certainty that she had no other Sabinsport correspondent but her father, and it was unthinkable that her father would write of their quarrel over the munitions contract.

CHAPTER V

OTTO LITTMAN was quite right in thinking that Reuben Cowder would not write his daughter about their quarrel. People might say what they would of Reuben Cowder's business methods, but he never hit below the belt. Moreover, he was too wise to attempt to influence the likes or dislikes of his spirited daughter. He had too great faith in the soundness of her instincts. However deeply she might be interested in Otto — and he feared it was deep indeed — he was confident that she would instinctively know whether he was loyal; and, of course, while she was in Serbia, there was no danger. He was quite right. Nancy was reading between the lines of Otto Littman's letters, and sensing far better than any one in Sabinsport the motives which had involved him in the German intriguing. Besides, she was wholly occupied with her work.

Dick realized, better even than Reuben Cowder, how the sorrows that she had undertaken to relieve absorbed her. He was getting better and better acquainted with the young woman in these days, for it came to be Reuben Cowder's habit, since his first talk with Dick, to bring him regularly her letters. Sometimes he dropped into Dick's study at night, sometimes he picked him up as he drove by in his car or stopped him as he met him on the street; and always Dick found that his reason was the need he had of talking about his girl. Evidently he talked to no one else, for nobody in Sabinsport knew any of the details of the terrible experiences these months had brought Nancy Cowder or anything of the hell of torment her father had gone

through. Dick himself never mentioned her name, sensing that, at the first hint the hard old man had that he had talked, his confidence would be silenced. Reuben Cowder had a terrible resentment against Sabinsport society because it misjudged his daughter. Sabinsport should never know of her from him, should not have the stupid satisfaction of rolling over her splendid service with idle tongue, and Sabinsport did not know more than that the girl had been in Serbia throughout the bitter months after the second invasion and repulse.

Dick knew the tragic story in spots, and, by his knowledge of the country and his careful reading of every scrap of news the leading journals of the world gave him, had pieced it into a whole. He saved every item he read to talk over with Cowder, and every day that he built up the story he unconsciously became more deeply involved. "The courage of the creature," he said to himself; "the gentleness, the gayety, the pity — why, she's a wonder woman. Who could have guessed it from the gossip of this benighted town?"

And as a truth, Nancy Cowder deserved all Dick was attributing to her. She was showing the qualities of a great, pitying, resourceful soul, naturally and quietly giving its life to ease the boundless misery of a brave and neglected little people.

She had first entered the country in 1914, stirred to the undertaking by the reports of the plight of the sick and wounded after the Austro-Hungarian invasions. Things in Serbia, indeed, were in a frightful way. Exhausted by two recent wars, her hospitals, never many, stripped of supplies, her few physicians and nurses worn out by the long strain through which they had been going, the country could scarce have been in a worse condition to stand a new shock. She, to be sure, repulsed her enemy, but the repulse cost a frightful

price of dead and mutilated. Who shall ever have the courage to tell of the savage cruelties that attended the retreat of the Austro-Hungarian army from Serbia in the fall of 1914? Those who followed after found men hanging in orchards, dead; women huddled in heaps where they'd been felled, the hideous first step in that decision to exterminate the Serbian people, which the Central Empires had taken.

It was a heart-breaking story that reached Nancy Cowder from an English official summoned home by the war. Her decision was immediate: "I'll go, there is need there. All the world will care for Belgium," and for a month she worked with her English friend, Betty Barstow, to get together a unit of a half-dozen women. The result was two physicians, two nurses, one chauffeur and one "general utility man," as Nancy called herself. They moved heaven and earth to raise money, collect supplies and secure such recognition from the English and French governments as would give their unofficial and volunteer caravan a standing before the Serbian authorities. They had little need of passports. A woman with surgical dressings in one hand and food in the other was welcomed as an angel from heaven by Serbians in those stricken days.

Nancy's party had gone into the country by Salonika, a city overflowing with the excited travelers of half the world. From there they had made their way to Valievo, a little town north of the center of Serbia, the terminus of a narrow gauge railroad which runs eastward connecting with the main line between Salonika and Belgrade. It was over this single track, with its dwarf engine and cars, that the soldiery of all Central Serbia was traveling—with their supplies, their wounded and their sick. Since the terrific fighting along the Save and the Dwina, wounded Serbs and

Austrians had been pouring into Valievo. Refugees had followed them. The little narrow-gauge railroad could not cope with this mass of misery. It had carried away what it could but numbers had been left behind.

Late in 1914 these six young and intrepid Samaritans arrived with bags, boxes of bandages, cordials and medicines — and more to follow. They had planned to find a little house on one of the green hillsides, to make it a home, and from there to go day by day among the people; and thus they started.

The little house was not hard to find. It looked out over the valley with its red-tiled roof and its suggestion of a distant time when the Turks were in the country as conquerors and built houses with overhanging eaves and trellised windows. It was from this little house that they started out for their work in what was then one of the most pitiable spots of all the many — oh, so many — on an earth which lifts a friendly face to man and begs of him to take of its fruits in peace and in content.

Their first day's work had brought them back, white and anguished. What were they in all this thing? It was sweeping back the waves of the sea with a broom, dipping it dry with a teaspoon, as they told one another. And so, indeed, it seemed at first sight. Valievo was one big hospital — its schoolrooms, public halls, churches, cafés, had been turned into wards — and such wards! The only beds were piles of straw on the floor. The only utensils the helter-skelter articles the doctors and nurses could pick up. And to meet this misery, there were just six doctors! Everything that they could do they had done to bring something like order and cleanliness into the situation, but it was a task manifold beyond the most tremendous effort of which they were capable. Hundreds of wounded men lay for

days on their straw beds unattended save for some rude first aid — and always lumbering ox-carts were jolting over the cobbled streets bringing from the hills more and more victims.

The condition was so shocking that Nancy and her friends cringed in horror at the sights and in despair at their own inadequacy. Yet what they could do they would. From daylight to dark they went from one group to another, cleansing and dressing wounds, changing straw often stiff with blood and filth, fumigating garments, letting in fresh air, furnishing nourishing food, doing a thousand little things to improve the conditions and to simplify the care of the stricken groups.

Regularly every week Nancy Cowder had written her father and she had taken always the greatest care possible that the letters got out. More than once she had sent a messenger with them to Nish or Belgrade. Because of this precaution, he had received with fair regularity news of her life and health for the past twelve months — and such wonderful letters as she wrote; the first appalled cry at the suffering — suffering so out of proportion to their puny efforts — was never repeated. The girl had plunged into steady work, and it was of what they did that she wrote — letters often actually gay in their triumph over their difficulties. They had not, to begin with, the commonest articles; basins, bed clothing, shirts. It took the most determined and continued efforts to supply themselves, but they never were discouraged, never downcast.

"Oh, Father, if you knew what we do without. Nothing matters, we know, if we can keep them clean and warm and fed. Straw on the floor doesn't matter — sheets don't matter, spoons and bowls don't matter. It takes so little if the little is right. We wage one long campaign to get things. I never knew how won-

derful money is before. You mustn't mind if I spend a great deal — if I overdraw — if I cut into my principal. There couldn't be a better use for it. If it all goes I can work. Why, I could earn my living as a hospital orderly now, Father. You ought to see what I can do — what I do do. I sweep floors and change straw. I cook and clean and drive nails. I've made what we call bedsteads with my own hands — and proud of it! I never knew that work — work with one's hands — could be so good. I feel as if I'd just begun to live. What a pity that it takes a *war* to teach idlers like me where the essence of life is found!

"Don't you worry, dear. I shall come back to you another person, and I shall know when I get there how much of real life there is to be had in Sabinsport."

"I don't understand," said Reuben Cowder.

"I do," said Dick.

"If she will only come back!" groaned Reuben Cowder.

"She will," said Dick.

"And be happy here! How can she be?"

"She's discovering Sabinsport in Serbia," said Dick.

"She can have all the money I have," said Reuben Cowder.

"You couldn't do better with it," said Dick.

Week by week the two men followed the work of the intrepid group. Nancy was exultant over so many things! The redemption of a forsaken church on a hillside turned into a perfectly good sanitarium for convalescents. "It has no windows left, so we do have air. The only way you get it in Serbia."

The wonderful help they were getting from the wounded who were able to get about — Austrian and Serbian — who built them incinerators, mended leaking roofs, brought wood for their fireplaces, scrubbed and cooked and even sewed. "We have a class in mat-

tress making — such a funny, funny class. There's a poor one-legged Austrian with a cough which will carry him off soon, once an upholsterer in Vienna. He has taught us all here to make strong, comfortable mattresses. I went myself to Nish and brought all the ticking and needles and thread I could find."

The feat over which Nancy crowed most, to which she was always coming back, was the Water Works. She always capitalized the words: "You can imagine, Father dear, how we've been handicaped for water. After our first week we never gave our patients a drink that had not been boiled at the house. We hired a stout peasant woman — there were no men to be had — to carry it — two buckets full on an ox-yoke! She followed us from place to place. We did our best to make the sick understand how dangerous it was to drink the dreadful water used in Valievo. We didn't succeed very well, though some of them would do almost anything to please us. When we took over the old church we were put to it for water at first. It had to be carried for nearly a mile. Then, oh, Happy Day, Dr. Helen and I made up our minds there must be water above us somewhere and we'd find it and pipe it down. We found a perfectly good, bubbling spring, grown about with willows. We paid the owner of the land his price for the water and I, Father, I, your spoiled, useless daughter, stood over three crippled Serbians while they cleaned and walled that spring and I, I taught them how to make a trough of boards to bring it to the house. At least I began by making myself a joint of the wooden trough we used to see at home and when they understood they made something far better. Now it flows, cold and sweet and clear into the sanitarium. I'm just crazy over it."

Nothing stirred Dick or alarmed Reuben Cowder more than the long fight with typhus, which began late

in the year in Serbia — and lasted through the winter. It was not at first realized that the peculiar form of the disease which ravaged the country was carried by body lice, but where it was known, the war on the pests which the unit had always waged took on a fury and an ingenuity worthy of the enemy. It was war, war, war. The girls shaved, sulphurized and burned from morning until night. They isolated the incoming, they so frightened their patients by their horror at a single beastie that it came to be a shame and a crime to be caught with one. And they conquered. And with the conquest typhus slowly retired from every spot in which they ruled. Nancy was jubilant.

"We've met the enemy and they are ours. We have a new National Anthem and we sing it daily. Don't tell it to the Sabinsport Woman's Club. It would swoon with shock — but, oh Father, if you'd seen what we have seen — if you had known the cause and if you had labored and sweat day and night for weeks to remove that cause, you would understand why we sing what we do. The words came to us from the Berry unit over the mountain where they, too, have fought and won — indeed from them we learned the danger and the way to meet it. Now take our National Anthem straight, Father:

"There are no lice on us,
There are no lice on us,
No lice on us.
There may be one or two
Great big fat lice on you,
No LICE ON US."

Reuben Cowder read that to Dick with tears running down his cheeks.

"My little Nancy," he said.

"She's a brave lady," said Dick.

The spring and summer came and went. The letters were unfailingly cheerful. They had settled down to work. With the end of the fighting and the conquest of typhus their life was more like that of a normal hospital. If primitive, it was sufficient. There was but one exciting episode. It came in one of the spring letters.

"A curious thing has happened, Father; one of the strange meetings this war is continually bringing about. A week ago an ox-cart drove in from the north with a Serbian wounded months ago — his leg had been amputated — sawed off. He had had no care in the winter. He had had typhus somewhere back in the mountains. Friendly peasants had tried to take care of him, but he was in a terrible shape — no flesh — just a spark of life left. They brought him finally to us — and we did our best of course. It's strange what a fury to save seizes you when a poor shattered thing like this is put into your hands. You fight and fight — and won't give in, and we won with this man, but I don't believe we would if he had not been so determined to live. He whispered it to one of the girls, speaking for the first time days after he came, whispered in perfectly good English, 'I must live.' She almost turned his broth over him she was so surprised. It was strange to us to find one like that. Most of them are so done they don't help — just lie staring, waiting to die, and only asking not to be touched. I have seen my dogs look at me as they do when they were dying. Their eyes always beg that you let them die in peace.

"Well, he grew stronger, and when he was able to keep his eyes open they never left me when I was in the ward. I knew there was something he wanted to say but was too weak, or perhaps his poor head was not yet quite clear. It was as if he knew me. And that was it, Father. He did.

"One day when he was better he called me. 'America?' he said.

" 'Yes,' I told him.

" 'Sabinsport?'

" 'What!' I cried, 'you know Sabinsport?'

" 'Yes — my wife, children there, Miss Cowder?'

" 'How do you know?'

" 'I saw you once, at the Emma.'

" He has been *my* patient from that hour, and if I never do another thing in Siberia I mean to get him on his feet and take him back to Sabinsport. As soon as you get this, cable if his family is there and well. It will help so. His name is Nikola Petrovitch."

Reuben Cowder hurried the letter to Dick. "You know the man, what about his family?"

"Living where he left them — well — and if they know he's alive, happy. It's been months since they've had news. Stana had almost lost hope. This will be wine to her. May I tell her Miss Cowder is nursing him?"

The old man gulped. "I suppose," he said, "it would give her more hope. If you don't mind, I'll go out with you. If Nancy has adopted Nikola, I guess I'll take the family." And so, for the first time in his life, Reuben Cowder entered the house of a miner, bringing glad news and honest sympathy.

The summer of 1915 came and passed slowly. News came regularly. Nikola was gaining strength, was sitting up; they had made him crutches, he was learning to walk; and then, in September, that which gladdened Reuben Cowder's sore heart as he had not believed it ever again would be gladdened — Nikola could take care of himself now. Nancy really needed a rest, and they were all insisting she take it. They would leave Serbia as early as possible in October, couldn't Reuben Cowder meet them in London? They

would cable when they reached Salonika, and he would have ample time.

It was wonderful to Dick to see the change in the man with the coming of the news. His silent tongue was loosened. For the first time in their lives, his business friends heard him talk freely of his daughter. For the first time Sabinsport learned in details of what Nancy Cowder had been doing, for when the seal he had put on his lips was broken by Reuben Cowder's change of heart, Dick told both Patsy and Mary Sabins the story, omitting no heroic touch and cunningly enlarging on two widely separated details — the romantic discovery, cure and expected return of Nikola Petrovitch and the continued support of Nancy's unit by Lady Barstow and her circle!

The story was quickly set loose, as Dick had expected it to be. The Woman's Club, the War Board, all High Town seized it as one more personal connection with the Great War. It is safe to say that the location of Serbia on the map of Europe had never been known to the tenth of one per cent. of Sabinsport up to the day that Dick confided the adventures of Nancy Cowder in that land to Patsy McCullon and Mary Sabins; but before a week had passed the library had it penciled in blue on a fresh outline map, with Valievo marked probably within fifty miles of the true location, but quite as exact as the maps which amateur cartographers of the press were publishing; the Woman's Club had engaged a lecturer to tell it what he knew of Serbia; a subscription had been started, and in the alley on the South Side Jimmy Flannigan's goat had been harnessed to Benny Katz' two-wheeled cart, and Reuben Cowder, coming through as usual, found the gang in white paper caps, marked with a crayon red cross, receiving Nick Brown who, limp and groaning, was impersonating Nikola Petrovitch's first appearance at the Valievo

sanitarium. Here again it was Jimmy Flannigan's big brother who, listening to Patsy at high school, had inspired the play.

The keenest interest was taken in Reuben Cowder's trip — for of course he was going. He was settling things for as long an absence as necessary, doing it feverishly, joyfully — he who had always stuck night and day at his post and grumbled at every business trip that he could not escape. He would be ready to start as soon as the cablegram came; Nancy had said early in October.

But October came. The first week passed — and no cablegram. The second week, and none. And then there fell on Reuben Cowder with crushing force the news of the second invasion of Serbia. From north and west came the Austro-Hungarians — from the west the Bulgars — hordes of them. This time there was to be no mistake. Serbia was not merely to be conquered; she was to be crushed, and the remnants swept into the sea.

The suddenness, the mass, the extent of the attack, left no doubt in Reuben Cowder's mind that whatever Serbia's fate might be — and that was as nothing to him — Nancy had been trapped. Unless she had reached Salonika before the advance, she'd have hardly a shadow of a chance. And he told himself, too, that if she saw need, she would not leave. His forebodings were so black that Dick urged him to go at once to London, as he had planned, not waiting for a cablegram: "I will send it when it comes. You'll be there to greet her when she does get out. If she doesn't come, try to arrange to go to Serbia yourself."

And it was on this advice that late in the month Reuben Cowder acted. Before sailing, he had in Washington used every official channel to get information of his daughter, but to no avail. When it seemed certain

that for the time being — and he was everywhere assured it was only for “the time being” — that he could not get news, he sailed, having first made elaborate arrangements with Dick about informing him if anything was heard.

By the time he reached London, the completeness of the disaster to Serbia was known. Her armies had been defeated on every side — they, and practically the entire population, were in retreat; had embarked for Corfu. For the moment the little island held the only organized remnant of the Serbian nation.

From time to time news came of this or that group of nurses or doctors who had joined the retreat, had been taken prisoner, or on their own had reached safety; but Reuben Cowder could get no clew to Nancy's whereabouts, though he worked day and night, interviewing every returning soldier or civilian of whom he heard, sending agents to Salonika and to Corfu to search. It was not until the opening of the year 1916 that news came to him that he trusted. This was when three of his daughter's companions in the Serbian unit reached London. They brought him the first trustworthy report of what had happened to Nancy when the invasion began, and while they could give no assurance that she was still living they at least left him the hope that this might be true. How improbable the girls felt this to be, they took care not to let the distracted man know.

Their story, so far as it interested Reuben Cowder, was soon told. The approach of the Austro-Hungarians from the north and the Bulgars from the west had begun the middle of October. The Serbians, who, through the months since the first invasion, had been accumulating stores and preparing for a second attack, welcomed the enemy, confident of their ability to drive him back. Their confidence was quickly destroyed.

The mass thrown against them was overpowering. Nish was taken early in November by the Bulgars, while by the middle of the month the army from the north was sweeping Valievo. Nancy's unit, unable to believe that they were in danger and unwilling to desert now that every day was multiplying the wounded, remained at their posts until the population was ordered out.

They quickly determined not to abandon the fleeing people. They would go with them, a traveling unit. Two great ox carts were secured, and their stores and a few of the most helpless patients loaded into them. Two native women who had become particularly useful were taken, and thus equipped these dauntless young women voluntarily threw themselves into the great river of Serbs flowing southward.

Of the terrors and hardships of that journey the girls passed over lightly. It was needless to torture Nancy Cowder's father, they felt. They told him only that a week after they started Nancy had become separated from them, that Nikola Petrovitch and one of their Serbian women attendants were with her at the time, and that as they were in a part of the country well known to both of them, they, in all probability, finding it impossible to overtake their own party in the rush and confusion of the fleeing mob, had sought to find a way out by another route, or had taken refuge in some mountain farm or village known to Nikola and unlikely to be reached by the enemy troops. This was the most hopeful thing they could tell him, and they made the most of the possibility, assuring him again and again that Nikola, although on crutches, was now strong and so good a mountaineer and so devoted to Nancy that he surely would find a place of safety for her. It was a slim hope — but it was a hope.

If the girls had had the courage to tell Reuben Cow-

der the truth about their parting with Nancy, he probably would have held the hope that she had escaped as lightly as they did; but that they could not do. They urged him, more for his own sake than for hers, to go himself to Corfu or Salonika, and arrange for a search party of Serbians familiar with the western mountains. This would at least occupy him. And so, early in January, 1916, he left London.

Armed with every conceivable passport and credential that sympathetic friends and officials could provide, he made straight for Durazzo,—the Albanian port held then by the Italians—the port from which so many of the refugees had been transferred to Corfu, to Corsica, and to Italy. It seemed to him sometimes on his journey that he was following a call. “Durazzo! — Durazzo!”—rang in his ears, whispered itself to him in his sleep.

So impelling was his conviction that he must at once get there that all contrary counsels, whatever their source, left him unmoved, and so to Durazzo he went, arriving the third week of the month. The Austro-Hungarians were already in Albania; they had taken ports to the north. It looked very much as if Reuben Cowder had arrived only in time to witness the Italian evacuation.

Searching for a lost one in that confusion was heart-breaking work. What was one woman among the thousands lost and dead in that horrible flight before the advancing army! The valleys, the hillsides, the crannies of the mountain on the route that they had traveled, were filled with hideous proofs of the anguish and death that marked the escape of the Serbians. Fully half of the army and of the civilian hordes that followed it were scattered or dead. Durazzo had been filled for weeks with the laments of those who

sought fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children — and never found them.

When he told the officials all he knew of Nancy since she left Valievo in November, he was assured that there was not a chance in a hundred — one despairing official said a thousand — that she was alive.

True, she might have gone through with some group which had reached Corfu or Corsica or Italy, but the probabilities were that in that case she would have cabled. It was not likely that she was alive if she had fallen behind. True, she might be concealed in some mountain hamlet, but no searching party was possible under any auspices now. "You would have to bring over an American army to protect you, and I understand you Americans are too proud to fight," one bitter, over-worked Italian Red Cross official flung at him. In all his determined, well-ordered, effective life, Reuben Cowder had never experienced before what he acknowledged to be a hopeless situation. This was hopeless.

He had followed a call. It had led him to Durazzo, and now, as if to mock his faith, he saw the enemy ready to sweep him into the sea as it had the people his daughter had befriended, and for whom he was willing to say now that she had died.

And then the impossible happened. Three days after his arrival, a Red Cross official, who had been particularly interested in his case, hastily summoned him to headquarters. A party of five men and two women, disguised as Albanian peasants, had just reached Durazzo. Such groups were common in those days. One of the men in this party — a man on crutches, a Serbian, claimed that a woman whom they carried with them in a rude hammock was an American. He had begged them to cable at once to Reuben Cowder

of Sabinsport, U. S. A., telling him his daughter was alive. He had asked for a nurse, and one had been sent to their lodgings. The Serbian had not been told that the man whom he sought was in all probability at that moment in Durazzo.

The Red Cross official said he felt certain, from the passports and papers that the man carried, there could be no doubt of the identity of the woman, but he did not want to raise any false hopes. Mr. Cowder must await the nurse's report before trying to see the girl. If she were as weak as the Serbian claimed, the shock of seeing him might be bad for her. A guide would conduct him to her lodgings. And this arranged, the over-worked, horror-fed, shock-proof Red Cross unit stopped for an instant to wonder and to rejoice over the amazing incident, and then turned back again to snatch what human drift it could from the flood of misery flowing through its hands, never again even to remember the names of the father and daughter so miraculously reunited.

Reuben Cowder never knew how he reached the wretched inn in which the little party had found shelter. Seeing him reeling and running through the street, one might have thought him demented, but dementia was too familiar in Durazzo in those days to cause remark. Nikola Petrovitch, meeting him at the door, shrank from his outstretched hands as if they were those of a ghost. In all his imaginings of what might happen to hasten the day when he could put his precious charge still alive into her father's care, he had never dreamed of this. Reuben Cowder here! Shaking his hands — begging for the truth — Was Nancy alive? Could he see her?

Nikola Petrovitch had no squeamish notions about joy killing; also he knew better than nurse or doctor the spirit and the courage of the woman for whose life he

had dared every danger that nature and man in their most murderous moods devise. He took Reuben Cowder by the hand and led him straight into the narrow stone-floored chamber where Nancy Cowder lay, and he took the astonished nurse by the arm and led her out. He was right, for a half hour later, when Reuben Cowder called back the nurse, the first color that had tinged the girl's cheeks in weeks was on them, and every day that followed, in spite of the difficulties and dangers in getting away from Durazzo, and the discomforts of the passage across the Adriatic on the crowded steamer, Nancy Cowder grew stronger. She would get well, she told her father confidently. These brave people who had brought her safe to Durazzo should not have risked themselves for nothing. And as for her father, never, never again would she leave him.

But getting well was to be a slow, slow process. They took her to a nook in the French Mediterranean, and there for months she lay, regaining little by little her all but exhausted vitality. Reuben Cowder stayed at her side, and Nikola Petrovitch was sent back to Sabinsport and to his family.

It was from Nikola that Sabinsport learned more of the heroism of Nancy and the devotion of her Serbian rescuers than Reuben Cowder himself ever knew. Her parting with her friends had not been an accident, as they had led him to believe. It had been a chance deliberately taken by Nikola when Nancy, worn out by her long year's work, had totally collapsed after a few days of the terrible sights and hardships of the retreat. They had found her one morning burning with fever and babbling nonsense. It was then that Nikola had asserted himself. Give him a bullock and a cart and the food they could spare, send one of the Serbian women with him, and he would take her to a place he knew in the mountains which the Austrians would never

find. When she was fit to move he would get her to a seaport or send her father word how to find her. And the group of terrified girls, knowing that death was almost certain in the rout in which they found themselves, believing this a chance, consented, yet in their hearts they never thought to see her again.

There was more hope of escape in Nikola's undertaking than they had realized. Already the Serbian soldiers had begun to break into bands, seeking hiding places little likely to be disturbed for months at least, and it was one of these bands that, coming on Nikola and his charges two days after they had started into the mountains, volunteered to act as a guard.

No one ever will know with what tenderness and devotion these rough soldiers, flying for their lives, cared for the delirious girl. The cart had to be abandoned, but from the coarse blankets they carried they rigged up a rough hammock, and for days took turns in carrying it. The spot they sought, and finally reached, was a tiny hamlet, hidden in a cleft of a mountain — a group of huts, a few women and children, a few goats and bullocks and sheep — all huddled together for the winter. They only too gladly welcomed the party, for if they brought tragic news, the soldiers had stout hearts and willing hands, and put hope again into the abandoned groups.

The guest house of the Zadruga, the one important family in the hamlet, was set aside for Nancy, and into it went every comfort that the community afforded — their homespun rugs, their homespun "tchilms" — hangings, some of which would have done credit to a Persian weaver — covered the walls. Homespun linen furnished her bed, native embroideries were spread over every piece of furniture. She had been an angel of mercy to their men; she had left her home to aid them — all they had was here.

The Serbian woman had learned in the months at Valievo that in the opinion of English and Americans at least, fresh air, warmth and cleanliness were essential if the sick were to recover, and in spite of the protestations of the inhabitants in regard to air she saw to it, with almost religious zeal, that Nancy had all three. Great goat skins made her a soft, warm bed; a roaring fire burned day and night in the fireplace; and on the hearth there was always a big jar of hot water.

After many days of fever and delirium, the girl began to rally, to know them, to understand where she was; and with consciousness came courage, and she lent her help to theirs.

Reuben Cowder, spending his time and money and wits in inventing devices to hasten Nancy's recovery, never could understand how anything but a miracle had saved her life, cut off as she was from everything that to him seemed essential. He little understood the power of resistance to death in Nancy herself, and he gave nothing like their due to the bracing mountain air the girl was breathing and the goat's milk and venison broth on which she was feeding.

The real miracle had been their escape from the mountains to the shore. Nikola Petrovitch had not waited for Nancy to rally to make his plans for the hazardous journey. He was dominated by the fear that sooner or later the Austrians might reach this hidingplace, that he might be killed. What, then, would become of Nancy? He must get her to the sea.

The project was not so wild as it would seem. The band of soldiers who had accompanied him to the hamlet was one of numerous bands that, breaking away from the main army in its flight, had taken refuge in remote places in the mountains of western Serbia and in the Albanian hills. Communications were soon established between these groups. Secret routes for

messages were opened. It was not long before they all had learned of the rapid sweep of the enemy into Montenegro and Albania, of the escape of their king and a portion of the people into Corfu, of the setting up there of the Serbian Government, and of the plans already afoot to rebuild the army.

Taking advantage of the opening connections, Nikola planned with the soldiers for getting Nancy out as soon as she was able to be carried. When, late in December, she began to sit up a little, he put his plan before her, told her of the groups scattered from point to point, which could be used as resting places, as refuges in case of need. These groups would know the best routes to follow, would send guides with them, would provide food. If she would risk it, he felt that they should begin the journey at once.

Weak as Nancy was in body, she was indomitable in spirit and welcomed the venture.

They wrapped her like a mummy in goat-skins, put her into a hammock of the same warm covering, and with bundles on their back, started out — two strong Serbian soldiers, the native woman who had never wavered in her devotion from the beginning of the flight, and Nikola, still on his crutches.

Nikola was never tired of telling his Sabinsport friends of the perils and hardships of the journey. To him the marvel was not at all that he and his fellows should have risked their lives, as surely they did; it was that, whatever the danger, the exposure, the privation, the girl they carried never lost heart, never complained, never failed to greet them with smiles. They knew she grew daily weaker and weaker; but they knew, too, she meant to live. Her courage was like a banner to them. It was something they followed — something they must not shame by discouragement or failure.

They followed it to the end, reaching Durazzo, as I have told.

To Sabinsport the tale took on the features of some great Odyssey, and it was their Odyssey, for did not both the heroine and the hero to whom she owed her life belong to them? Sabinsport had not yet realized that at that hour every nook and corner of the European continent had its Odyssey.

And it was the town's introduction to the Balkan question. Up to now, Serbia had scarcely been included in the field of war. There was a Western front and an Eastern for them, but that was all. Serbia's tragic fate, brought home to them as it was by Nancy Cowder's escape, set them to asking what it meant. Why should Austria set out to annihilate a people? Why, even Belgium's fate, hard as it had been, did not compare in cruelty with this. She meant to exterminate—nothing else. How could such things be? Should such things be? And if not, what should Sabinsport do about it?

The War Board was terribly stirred over the matter, and Captain Billy did not hesitate to condemn the Allies bitterly for not having sent aid in time to prevent the disaster. "If we'd gone into this war when we ought to," he declared loudly, "this thing never would have happened. Our boys would have gotten around there in time." And there was a constantly increasing number of people who agreed with him.

Mr. John Commons, with his usual Shavian perversity, sneered at the indignation of the body, and he spent an entire evening reviewing the history of the Balkans, pointing out with real enjoyment the inconsistencies, violated agreements, murders and cruelties with which the states charge one another. He claimed he could match every Bulgar atrocity with a Serbian,

and quoted a well-known modern commission to prove his point. They were a group of lawless states, born and brought up to cut one another's throats — and that a peaceful group of American citizens should lash themselves into fighting mood because one of the cut-throats was getting the worst of it, was only another of the unspeakable absurdities of this war. And why were they so stirred up? They hadn't even remembered Serbia was in the war until this story about Nancy Cowder came out. Fool thing for any woman to do — just another example of the mania for notoriety that had seized women in these times. He supposed Sabinsport would insist on making a lion of her when she came back. He hoped she'd have sense enough to have nothing to do with the people that had ignored her so long; that she'd see their interest in Serbia was nothing in the world but vanity — their desire to flatter themselves they knew somebody who had been in the thick of things. Absurd, he called it — enough to make the gods laugh.

The members of the War Board went home much perturbed after this long harangue, for they were considerably muddled in their minds. Was their sudden interest and sympathy ridiculous? Dick was much interested to find how the thoughtful ones figured it out. Of course Captain Billy didn't need to figure it out. Captain Billy instinctively and promptly took his position on any question which arrested his attention. He never had to think — he knew. To him all this "back history" had nothing to do with the case. Germany and Austria were the enemy. Serbia was on the side of the Allies. That was all that was necessary for him to know. Neither the War Board nor the town was so sure. In many a quarter of the town Dick ran on efforts to understand what Europe herself has so long and so fatally failed to understand. The boys in his

club began to ask for books on the Balkans. It was no uncommon thing to find the butcher or the grocer catechizing Czech or Serb or Greek, getting their point of view. And the stories they heard were repeated. Nikola Petrovitch became one of the most popular men in town. The radical Rev. Mr. Pepper gave a series of Sunday night talks on the submerged Balkan States, boldly declaring for a United States of Europe, which, if not a new idea to statesmen and journalists, certainly was new, and not very intelligible to his congregation, most of whom thought he was going rather far afield for something to talk about. And yet they listened, tried to understand, and many of them discussed the idea — studied their maps — looked up forgotten histories.

It was leaven — working leaven; and slowly there rose out of it the conviction in Sabinsport that something was very wrong indeed in Southwestern Europe, and that the powerful states of those parts, instead of trying to right the wrongs by just agreements, faithfully observed, were, and long had been, intent on keeping the hot-headed little states in turmoil and in suspicion, watching their chance for a plausible excuse to pounce on them one by one and absorb them. Certainly this was as near the truth as you could get in regard to Serbia and Austria; and it ought to be stopped. There were few, if any, in Sabinsport yet, however, that felt that our responsibility reached that part of the world. To rescue France and avenge Belgium might come to be our business — *was* our business, certain ones felt more and more strongly. But the Balkans? No, that was not for us.

CHAPTER VI

SABINSPORT took the fate of Serbia more to heart because just before Nikola came home in March of 1916, with his thrilling personal tales, Verdun had knocked her growing hardness and indifference toward the war to splinters. That sudden fierce flood, breaking at a point in the long line of which she had never heard, threatening as it did to engulf the defenders and sweep over Paris, marked an epoch in Sabinsport's war history. Not since the invasion of Belgium had feeling run as high as now. There was a keen personal anxiety lest her chosen side should be beaten, for the attack revealed to Sabinsport that she had a chosen side, that she cared — cared for the Allies; and, above all, cared for France.

Verdun broke a crust that had formed over the town; a curious crust which had grown thicker and thicker through the winter of 1915-16, justifying much of Ralph's bitterness and filling Dick with increasing dread. Half of this was reluctance to going into war — not fear, mind you, not at all. There was no fear in Sabinsport's heart of anything that she made up her mind she must do, but there was a strong feeling that she ought not to have to go into this war, that it was not her business, that there ought to be a way out. It was clinging to this reluctance through a growing consciousness that the things which she stood for were being attacked, that hardened her. She did not see clearly yet, it is true, that it was her ideas of life that were at stake on the earth; but she every day more strongly suspected that was the case, and she was reluctant to admit it.

An element in the crust, and a hard one, was her desire not to be disturbed in her prosperity. She was making money. The whole face of Sabinsport had been changed in the year and a half since the war began. The great wire mill had trebled its plant and was running in three shifts, day and night. The old linoleum factory around the Point had never stopped growing. There were 2,000 girls there now, the pick of Sabinsport and all the country round. When you can make twenty to forty dollars a week, for eight hours' work, as these girls were doing, you can get pretty nearly any wage-earning woman that you want, so Sabinsport had discovered. Teachers had left the schools throughout the county, stenographers had left their desks, clerks had left the counters, and the farmers' daughters for miles around had flocked into the factory. This meant business for Sabinsport. Months before her housing capacity had outrun the demand. The onrush of strange men and women had raised a score of difficult and delicate problems; but it all meant money. Never had the shops of Sabinsport made so much, never had they charged so much. And this prosperity had made a new class in Sabinsport, a new kind of rich — the munition rich they called them. They succeeded the class whose fortunes had been made in the factories, as that class had succeeded one whose fortunes came from franchises; immediately back of which lay those made rich by coal, the successors of the original land rich. And, like each successive new rich class, they brought into the town an element of vulgarity which their predecessors had been gradually living down, the kind of hard and reckless vulgarity which the sudden possession of money almost invariably causes. There were not a few in Sabinsport whose families had outlived all this unpleasant phase of wealth, who felt and talked very hardly of this class.

There was no question that they helped in the forming of the crust over Sabinsport's soul.

There was still another element, which had much to do, I am convinced, with a certain tenaciousness in the crust, and that was the conviction that Germany was bound to win; and all they wanted, since this was so, was to see it over — stopped — get the sound of it out of their ears, the stench of it out of their nostrils.

No, Germany could not be beaten. She had driven back Russia. She had won at Gallipoli, she had stripped Serbia from its people and driven king and army to take refuge on an island of the sea. She had devised unheard of weapons of terror and destruction in the air and under the water. She stood surrounded by enemies, but enemies divided by seas, divided in command, untrained and unfurnished; sure, and daily more brutal and fearful because so sure. Sabinsport did not believe she could be conquered. She had a great distaste for the conclusion, but a fact was a fact, and what reason had you to suppose she could be held when once she advanced? She would not make a second mistake on the Marne.

And if this was the truth, what was the use of Sabinsport's going in? Of course there were those who said, "It will be our turn next." But Sabinsport was very far, at this point, from believing this.

This crust over Sabinsport's soul had more and more discouraged Dick through the winter. Hard as it was, however, he held on, in face of the town's settled conviction, to his belief in final victory. He simply could not see either England or France giving up. It wasn't possible. They weren't made that way. They would die and die and die but not surrender; and it was this inner conviction that amounted to knowledge that was both his support and his torture, for he did not fool himself for a moment with any hopes of speedy victory.

It would be long, long, long years — and what years! Young men, boys, old men, steadily marching to death, and always behind them others coming to fill their places — the earth ravaged of its manhood. High hearts, great loves, beautiful talents, beneficent powers, destroyed until the earth had been stripped of its best. Women, steadfast and brave, giving lovers, sons, friends — all that made life fruitful and lovely — giving them with no waver in their heroic souls, the only outward sign their whitening hair, their sinking cheeks, their anguished eyes. He saw the destruction of the best work of men's hands, the stopping of kindly industries, the making of things which brought comfort and health and joy to men — all ended that every hand could be put to making that which would best and quickest blow to pieces the largest number of human beings or most certainly sink them to the secret bottom of the pitiless ocean. He saw all this and still believed in victory.

We would go in. Dick never doubted it from the day that England's ultimatum was given and refused. Our turn would come. It was the logic of the struggle. Sabinsport would see its men march off to death and mutilation, would see its women silently growing old, its works of peace turned to works of war; all its healthy, daily life remolded to serve the Great Necessity of conquering the Monster broken loose.

Most cruelly had he suffered through the days of Gallipoli, and in this he was alone. It seemed to him sometimes that no one in Sabinsport ever thought of what was going on in Gallipoli. The truth was the field of the war had become too wide, too complicated, for Sabinsport to follow. The war for her was the line from the Channel to Switzerland, and particularly the part of it where the fighting of the moment was liveliest, so she refused to consider Gallipoli.

Dick followed every detail of that cruel and valiant struggle. He had a talent for the visualization of physical things which he had trained until it was instinctive. Topography, contour, forests and fields, towns, farms, churches, the turn of streets and the winding of rivers, the look of shop fronts, the town square, its fountains and statues, the town promenade, the costumes of men and women, the cattle they prized, the horses they drove, the dogs at their heels — he saw them all. It had been his play in travel to anticipate what he was to see, and then to compare with what he found. With much travel, gaining knowledge of things as they are and as the books say them to be, Dick had grown amazingly clever in this play of construction.

But since the war this faculty had become a torture. It was so much a part of him that he could no more prevent its operating than he could prevent his mind from instinctively forming judgments. But never in the war had he been so cruelly tormented as by the scenes which passed before his eyes, as real as the streets of Sabinsport, every time that he saw or heard the word "Galipoli." True, his affections were deeply touched. Some of the best friends of his Oxford days were there, and one by one he learned they would never return. The sandy, burning, treeless, waterless tongue of land, with its scanty footholds for the English and its sheltered pits for the enemy that from over their heads in the heights poured fire and death on them, to him seemed like some hideous dragon — a dragon fifty-seven miles long, carrying on back and in belly every weapon of destruction known to man and nature. He grew sick and faint as he saw men he loved making their landings through spitting shell and shrapnel, saw them crawling through mesquite and sand to attack, saw them wounded and abandoned, going mad under

the burning sun or dying of pain and exhaustion where they lay on beach or hillside. It was infernal; a mad, romantic adventure, gallantly, chivalrously undertaken and carried on to its ghastly failure.

Dick could neither forgive nor forget Gallipoli. Then came the attack on Verdun — and the crust broke in Sabinsport. He was no longer alone now in his anxiety. Everybody *cared*. There was Patsy. Patsy was wild with fury and with dread. The day and night she had spent in Verdun in August, 1914 — preceded and followed as it was by much looking at fortifications and listening to much clear explanations by her friends and the officers who piloted them — had given Patsy a keen sense of what Verdun meant for both attacked and defenders. All that she had seen and heard, all the confidence she had of the impregnability of the place when there — her sense of surprise that the French officers should look serious, even anxious — had been shattered by the events of Belgium's invasion. Did not Namur have encircling forts? Had she not seen their guns and heard tales of their strength, and had not the Germans *walked* into Namur?

Oh, they would shatter Verdun and all its pleasant places. She would never do what she had dreamed — go when she was old and sit again in the garden of the little café by the Meuse, and reflect how here were things that did not change. She brought out the first long letter she had sent after the war began and recalled details of what she had seen — could it be but eighteen months ago that she climbed to the highest tower of the Verdun citadel and looked over the town and country — and now, why now, those very buildings were many of them in heaps — all that fair country torn open, its great trees down, its farms desolate. The infamy of it!

Patsy lost no chance now to stir Sabinsport. In

school, in her club, with her friends, she talked Verdun, and she asked tragically and constantly the question that she had not asked often of herself or others in the past, so absorbed was she in Belgium's relief, and that was, "*When* are we going in? Are we going to let this thing go on? If Paris is to be ravished like Louvain, are we going to sit quiet?"

It was this unanswered question, stirring in Sabinsport's unsatisfied soul, that made her take so to heart her first war casualty. It came at the very start of the diversion by the English, the diversion on the Somme, which gave the first real hope of relieving Verdun.—Mikey, Katie's son, now Lieut. Michael Flaherty, if you please, went over the top — and Mikey did not come back.

They left him in No Man's Land, with a bullet through his brain — a clean, quick death, thank God — no writhing on live wires, no hours of hideous, hopeless pain in the mire, uncared for, no slow dying — just one quick stab when his blood was hot with the passion of war and his heart was at the highest.

The news came straight to Dick, as Mikey had carefully planned it should. Soon after he reached France he had written back, "If anything should happen to me, Mr. Dick, I've fixed it so they'd tell you first, and I know you'll make it as easy as you can for my mother. Not that I'm worrying, but a fellow gets to looking out for things here."

Mikey's thoughtfulness was justified. As Dick held the message which came to him at daybreak and tried to frame words which would be gentle and merciful, he felt utterly helpless.

In the year that Mikey had been gone, Katie had become more and more proud of him. She was confident he would return as a "gineeral." And Katie had a right to be proud. Mikey had done wonders. His

strength, his wit, his love of a fight, his proud conviction that he'd gone in for Mr. Dick, all had made him a wonderful soldier. He had been advanced, he was Lieutenant Flaherty by the spring of 1916, and Katie had a picture of him in her pocket, familiar, indeed, to most of Sabinsport because Ralph had printed it in the *Argus*. It had been copied in a city Sunday supplement, much to the joy of Katie and the pride of the Boys' Club and the War Board. At the latter place, in fact, it had been given a place of honor on the wall opposite King Albert and Papa Joffre, and underneath in big letters, printed carefully by Captain Billy, were the words, "Lieut. Michael Flaherty, Sabinsport, U. S. A."

And now he was dead. How, Dick asked himself, could he go to the woman whose only son had given his life in doing his work? How could he console poor Katie — he, the cause of her grief? An indirect and unwilling cause, to be sure, but would Mikey have found his way to France without him? he wondered now, as he sat miserably looking at the yellow sheet in his hand. Katie had long ago worked it out that it was the martial soul of the boy that had led him away. "He'd a gone without you, Mr. Dick. He's a born soldier. He'd a gone wherever the war was in the world if he'd never seen you." Would she still think so when he told her?

He gathered himself up finally and went about his morning toilet. Katie came at seven. His breakfast was always served at the stroke of eight. He had only begun his dressing when he heard the distant click of her door. He could hear her singing when, later, he gathered his resolution and went to the kitchen. She was at the stove frying his bacon — she turned a red and happy face to him.

"What's the matter, Mr. Dick, comin' in at this

time of —" She stopped — her frying pan high over the stove. "Is it Mikey you've news of?" The dread anguish in the voice after the hearty cheer of a moment before hurt Dick like a knife.

"Katie," he said, putting a gentle hand on her shoulder — "my poor Katie!" and the tears came.

"He's hurt! He's dead!"

"He's dead, Katie."

She stood stock still, and slowly a look of fierce hatred came into her face. "God pity the Germans that fought him. It don't say how many he killed?" Then, dropping frying pan and bacon, and throwing her apron over her head, she fell into a chair and rocking back and forth, cried in her sorrow:

"O Mikey, Mikey! What's the use of it all? What's the use of it all?"

As Dick recalled the miserable hour later, there was one strong and uplifting thing in it — the woman's brave efforts to control her grief and attend to his morning wants.

"The likes of me," she said, fighting back her tears, "forgettin' you like this. Ye'll forgive me, Mr. Dick?" Dick begged her not to mind him, to let him wait on himself — she wouldn't hear of it, but went through the round. Never for an instant, Dick knew, did she have a thought of holding him responsible. Never for a moment did she think of neglecting him. Only once more did she completely break down.

It was when, in reply to her sudden question, "When will I be gettin' my body, Mr. Dick!" he had been forced to tell her that even that poor comfort was denied. Then again the apron went over her head, and again that pitiful wail, "O Mikey boy! O Mikey boy! What's the use of it all? What's the use of it all?"

Sabinsport took Mikey's death to heart. The boy had long been a town character. From the time he had

first appeared — freckled, red-headed, round as a tub — on the seats of the Primary Department, his elders had been forced to take account of him. The well of vitality in him bubbled from morning until night. His pranks followed one another in a stream no punishment could more than momentarily check. For originality and unexpectedness, no mischief known to Sabinsport's School Board and school teachers had ever touched Mikey's. It had a mirth-provoking quality, too, which made it hard to be dealt with adequately. He did "the last thing you'd think of" — the kind of thing which was passed from mouth to mouth and set the men, particularly, to grinning. The women took it more seriously — they had to deal with him. Katie "licked" him, as she called it, faithfully and hard; and Mikey took it manfully as part of the order of things. He had his philosophy: "If you don't have no fun you don't git licked." He preferred fun, and hardened his soul to punishment.

He had grown up decent as could be expected, and so merry that everybody loved him. He was in the way of becoming a crack in the wire mill when the *Lusitania* outrage came, and he ran to join the avengers as quickly as from childhood he had always jumped into any fight in alley or street, in school or shipyard, when his queer sense of justice was aroused. He was always a "grand fighter," Katie often said, when townspeople congratulated her on the part he had taken with the Canadians. There was no doubt but that Sabinsport followed more carefully the famous fights of the English because Mikey Flaherty was with them. The Boys' Club, the War Board, the *Argus*, Katie's friends, Patsy at the High School and in the Women's Clubs — all watched for the reports of what the Canadians were doing — talked them over, and wondered first if Mikey, and later if the Lieutenant, was there. It was

the idea that somebody they had always known was living in the trenches that gave an interest and a reality to mud and rats and cooties, which grew with what they heard. Mikey's letters were read and re-read and printed in the *Argus* "by request."

Ralph grumbled at the abnormal curiosity, as he called it, for horrors, and again quarreled with Patsy for cultivating the love of war among her pupils, to which Patsy hotly replied that she'd never, as long as she lived, cease to cultivate hatred of Germany and her kind of war. And then for days there would be coldness between them. Patsy would cry herself to sleep, and Ralph would go about glum and self-accusing, save now and then when he would burst into cursing at war and all its horrible effects. "If it wasn't for the war, I'd have friends in Sabinsport," he told Dick.

If there was no one else in Sabinsport by the summer of 1916 to whom the war had brought the same anguish as to Katie Flaherty, there was a constantly larger number to whom it was bringing dread and pain. The war — this war which did not concern them, continued to reach its long and cruel tentacles across the sea and every now and then literally lift a member from some apparently somnolent family. There was Young Tom, as all Sabinsport called the eighteen-year-old son of Tom and Mary Sabins. Young Tom had come home from school in the fall of 1915 and announced that he had volunteered for ambulance service in France, and that if they didn't do the square thing and let him go, he'd run away. And they knew he would do it. Tom took it squarely and with inward pride, but Mary Sabins' world toppled on its foundations when she heard his ultimatum and realized that for some reason unknown to herself her husband actually sympathized with the boy.

"But why? Why? It's not your country. You

have no right to go. You're my son. I will not consent."

"Mother," said Young Tom, with the cruel finality of youth that nothing but its own wish moves, "I'm going. This is the biggest scrap the world ever saw, and you needn't think I'm going to miss it."

"But wait — wait until you're twenty-one," she urged. "You must finish college. You might be killed."

"Sure, I might — but I won't be. If I wait I'll miss it. It will be over. Can't you understand, Mother, why a fellow wants to get into the big things? And then, darn it, Mother, haven't you any feeling for France? Why, France helped us when we were up against it, and we owe her one."

But to Mary Sabins the appeal was empty. It reached neither her mind nor her heart. Young Tom was part of *her* world — her own private affair. What right had the war to touch it? What could ail him that he should do this mad thing? She had all her plans made for him — they had money to carry them out. This spoiled everything.

Mary fought with all her strength, employed all the resources for persuading she had developed. It was pitiful how few they were, how defenseless she was. She who had always had what she wanted, she whom a father first and then a husband had delighted to serve. She had no weapons for fighting, she realized, because she had never needed them. To ask had been all she had ever done, and here was their lad, her son, failing her, defying her, unhearing when she cried, disobeying when she ordered. She was horrified by the hopelessness of her resistance, and shocked no less by the knowledge that Tom himself did not agree with her; that he even rejoiced in the boy's daring.

There were women, too, who said, "How proud you

must be, Mary." The boy had gone early in 1916. She heard from him regularly, but she was bitter in her heart, and for the first time in her life did not find full satisfaction in her busy days of planning and buying for herself and household, in keeping immaculate her luxurious home, in entertaining and being entertained in the lively Sabinsport group in High Town.

In her grief Mary had had but one real comforter — Katie Flaherty. It was Katie's pride in her soldier that had persuaded Dick, soon after Young Tom left, that she might at least help reconcile Mary Sabins to the boy's adventure. And Katie asked nothing better than to talk. "Don't you be worryin' about your by, Mrs. Sabins," she said. "Don't I know all about it, and me a widder and him me only one? But I'm that proud of him now I can't sleep o' nights sometimes. The pluck of him — to get up in the night and go, fearin' I wouldn't let him. Sure, and your by never did the likes o' that. He told you square and you could say good-by and get his picture and go to the train and see him off. What'd you done if you'd got up in the mornin' and found him gone and nothin' but a letter left? God help me, Mrs. Sabins, it was the first time since he was laid in me arms the hour after he was born, that I hadn't waked him — and sometimes bate him to get him up to breakfast. To call him, and call him and get no answer, to go scoldin' in to shake him and find he'd niver been in the bed at all, and a letter on his pillow — no, ma'am, you hadn't that. You saw him off. An' he's doin' fine over there. Think of the good he'll be doin', haulin' the boys that gets hurt to the doctor — that's what Mr. Dick says he doin'. And fine work it is. Don't you think I'm easier in my mind for knowin' there's ambulancers like him to pick up my Mikey if a dirty German sticks him? Sure I am. You ought to be that proud not to be mother to a coward." And so

on and on Katie talked, and somehow Mary Sabins always was for a time less bitter after hearing Katie.

And then news came of Mikey's death. It was the first time since Young Tom had left that Mary had quite forgotten herself in sympathy for somebody else. Dick telephoned her, and she had hurried to the rectory where in Katie's kitchen the two women cried on each other's shoulders, entirely unconscious of the difference in station that ordinarily kept one standing while the other sat! It was the beginning of one of the most wholesome and steady friendships Mary Sabins had ever had.

But while Mikey and Young Tom were the two best known figures now "in the war," they were by no means the only ones. There was John A. Papalogos. He had called Dick in one morning soon after the first revolutionary outbreak in Greece. His face was ablaze with joy. "It's come," he said. "It's come — no more kings for Greece — we'll have our Republic. I go to fight for Greece free. I go now, but what I do with my place?" and he looked blankly at the full shelves of "fancy goods" and the stock of fruits and candies.

"I'll look after it," said Dick, promptly. "Go as soon as you please," and John A. Papalogos, radiant with relief, had departed twenty-four hours later, leaving a fruit store on Dick's hands — a fruit store with a primitive set of accounts in the drawer and written instructions to close it out and give the proceeds to the Boys' Club in case of his known death.

"The war certainly is getting its hands on you, all right," said Ralph when Dick told him of his new care. "You needn't worry about your bit." But Dick only gulped.

There were others from Sabinsport gone over-seas — men hardly known to the town, and yet their going

was swelling constantly the town's interest, knowledge, sense of connection — these were men from mines, factories, mills, men who picked up and left without even a notice in the *Argus* — to join the Canadians — the English, the Foreign Legion. They were of many nations — and months later — long after their going had been forgotten save by a few, word sometimes came from them by more or less accident to their friends — "Lost a leg at Vimy"; "Decorated at Verdun"; "Killed at Messine Ridge." Their number was so considerable that it finally led Ralph to investigate, and Sabinsport was deeply stirred to read one night the names of fifty men whom the European war had taken — twenty-five were foreigners, but twenty-five were Americans.

"It's getting us," Ralph said, again and again. "It's getting us." And it was getting them. Dick, who at times watched almost breathless with desire that Sabinsport should understand, and who again and again groaned, "God! how slow she is to see it," began to take heart. So deeply was the town engaged in thought and feeling that not even the coming of a war of her own detached her interest. Indeed, it was a little difficult for her to take the trouble with Mexico very seriously, not being able to stretch her imagination to the point where Mexico could be anything more serious to the United States than a nuisance. Yet it did make a difference in things. When the call came in June a hundred men and boys suddenly appeared in khaki on the streets, making for the rendezvous. They came from the towns and surrounding country, and passed through the town so quietly and swiftly that Sabinsport gasped with amazement. She had not realized that she and the neighborhood had soldiers.

It disturbed things some. A thriving little grocery closed its doors because the young proprietor was

among the called. His wife with her baby went home to her father and mother. It was hard; but all she said was, "It's war." Dick started when they repeated the incident to him. "That was what returning Americans never ceased to marvel at in French and Belgian women — their quiet answer to every hardship, every sorrow — '*C'est la guerre.*'" That was what had amazed Patsy at Namur. And here was a commonplace little woman in this land, which the returning Americans always insisted was utterly lost in selfishness and cowardice, giving up her home and all her dawning hopes, with the same simple, "It's war."

Was war one of the universal facts accepted by simple people, to whom life is all reality and almost nothing of speculation and theory? Was it something they knew by instinct to be one of the inevitable tragedies of human existence, like sickness and death, storms and pests? Did all natural people take war this way, neither revolting nor lamenting? Could it be that Americans, trained to despise and hate war as a lower form of energy, an appeal only for those people who were ruled by tyrants and forbidden to express their will, to use their brains and self-control in finding peaceful conclusions for all misunderstandings — could it be that they, too, accepted it with this simple, "It is war"?

If the Great War came to the country, as Dick believed it must soon, would Sabinsport take it as she was taking the Border Trouble — send her men, readjust her affairs, go on with her daily duties? He wondered, but he was comforted; and as he watched the way Sabinsport took the successive steps of the Mexican difficulty, he gathered more and more hope. She watched every day's events, discussed, criticized, condemned, approved. She knew as much of the essentials as the metropolis, though, as he realized, the me-

tropolis was loudly proclaiming that Sabinsport did not even know there was a war either with Mexico or in Europe; that she was simply a sample of all of the United States outside of a portion of the Atlantic Coast, lost in money-making and comfort-seeking.

Dick said little, but more and more he became convinced that Sabinsport was taking the thing quite as seriously, if less noisily, than that portion of the Atlantic Coast that felt that all loyalty and understanding was centered in itself. She had her losses. The little grocer never came back — shot in a riot. Two farmers' boys died of fever, and Sabinsport buried them in pride and sorrow. "She takes it so straight," he thought. "I wonder if it will be like this when the great thing comes."

The great thing was coming, he felt, and he felt that Sabinsport vaguely knew it — was only waiting to be sure. To him it all depended on Sabinsport whether we went into the war — not on the Administration, not on Congress, not on the angry, indignant voices that hurled cries of scorn at her. We would go in when Sabinsport was sure! Sure of what? When she was sure that we could no longer do business with Germany.

CHAPTER VII

THIS crescendo of interest was not lost on Ralph. He knew in his heart it was sucking him in, had known since the day the news had come of the attack on Verdun. He knew then that he, like Sabinsport, cared about the result; but he kept his feeling carefully concealed, hardly admitting it to himself.

He was still floundering. For some time after his frank repudiation in August of 1915 of Labor's National Peace Council, he had fidgeted from question to question in the *Argus*, trying to fix firmly on a campaign which would advance his program for Sabinsport's regeneration and either ignore or belittle the war. But nothing he attempted counted. It was all trivial, temporary, beside the great stakes for which Europe was struggling. The minds of his readers were there, not in Sabinsport. It was so even in the mills and factories, where the men and women of a dozen nationalities watched the contest and not his efforts to fight what he insisted was their battle. What he did not sense was that these grave laboring people were slowly realizing that *their* battle was being fought overseas. They could not have told you how or why, perhaps, but feel it they did; and every letter from those of their number in the war fed the idea. It grew amazingly in the mines after Nikola came back with his tale of a nation driven into the sea. Such things should not be. Were not the Allies fighting to put an end to them, to punish those that dared attempt them? If so, was that not the common man's battle?

The only discussion Ralph carried on in this period which really stirred Sabinsport was his defense of the Federal Administration's dealings with Germany. He

was as violent in upholding its policy as his own party was in abusing it. Not that he was any more willing to yield the nation's rights under international law than his Progressive leader, but he believed with all his obstinate, passionate soul that these rights could be preserved without war. He upheld every successive note, pointing exultantly to their skill in cornering Germany, in forcing admissions and submission from her. "And not a gun fired," he always cried.

Under his eloquent leadership, the town became familiar with every point and every fact in the long-drawn-out controversy. The interest was such that full sets of documents were to be found in more than one unlikely place. Thus Sam Peets, the barber at the Paradise, had all that mattered in the drawer under his big glass in front of his chair, his repository for years for whatever interested him in public affairs. And if anybody questioned or mis-stated either the position of Germany or the United States, Sam would stop, whatever the condition of his client's face, and pull out the document which settled the matter. Captain Billy always carried, stuffed in disorder in his overcoat pocket, most of the essential papers; and there was more than one man in the wire mill that had them tucked away in some safe place in his working clothes or some hidden corner of the great shop.

But the machinery which Ralph applauded, and in which Sabinsport certainly wanted to trust, did not work smoothly. Again and again the pledges on which we rested were violated; and then, in the spring of 1916, when the town's heart was still big with anxiety over the fate of Paris, came the sinking of the *Sussex*, and the cynical declaration of one of the German leaders in frightfulness that henceforth there should be "unlimited, unchecked, indiscriminate torpedoing, directed against every nationality and every kind of ship."

Germany yielded at the prompt threat of the United States to break with her. She yielded, promised all we asked — reparation, right of search, faithful attention to the laws of the sea as they had been at the coming of war. But Dick had felt at the time that Sabinsport, as a whole, would have been much better satisfied if the victory over Germany in the matter of the *Sussex* had been a victory of guns rather than of notes. Certainly Uncle Billy and Patsy and those who followed them felt so, and said so — Patsy with such insistence that Ralph who, throughout the spring had been honestly trying to cultivate control in her company, broke out hotly one day:

“You ought to be proud of our victory,” he declared; “a victory of civilized methods instead of barbarous ones, but to hear you talk one wouldn’t dream that you had ever heard of it. Why, Patsy, we’re the only nation that has won a victory over Germany since the war began. We’ve made her give up the very weapons on which she counted most, and we’ve done it without a soldier or a gun.”

“A victory!” sniffed Patsy; “you’ll see she’s given in because the English were getting ahead of her. She’ll come back to it again. She lies. Wasn’t I in Belgium when —”

“Good Lord, Patsy, can’t you ever for a moment forget Belgium? You don’t know yet, nor does any one, the real provocation the Germans had.”

At which Patsy, white with rage, left the room, but only to talk more and more vehemently, while Ralph the next day published an editorial in the *Argus* which was long remembered. He called it “The Unpopularity of Civilization.”

In the course of it he said:

“How small a place civilization has in the hearts and understandings of vociferous America has been

most vividly and interestingly demonstrated in recent weeks. As an exhibit of its unpopularity, the reception the settlement of our struggle with Germany has met surpasses anything that I remember in our history. We were and had been for a year in a critical case. We had undertaken to force a great power to admit that she was violating international law, and to exact from her a promise to obey it.

"There were two methods of attempting to secure a reinstatement of the broken law. One was by arms. It was possible to say, 'Withdraw your ambassador. We *fight* for our right.' That way men have been trying for more than a century to do away with. Civilization means doing away with it — substituting reason for force, brains for fists, ballots for bullets. Vociferous America subscribes to this ambition. Indeed she says that it is for the sake of compelling this substitution — insuring it — that she wants armies and navies. If this be so — if she does so love civilization, why then, when she sees the complete success of civilized machinery, is she so sore?

"Nobody denies that it has been a victory. It is doubtful if we have ever had a victory of diplomacy that compared with it. England and France say so. We know in our hearts it is a rousing victory.

"Suppose that instead of forcing an abandonment of the methods which we contended were contrary to the laws of nations by arbitration as we have done, we had forced it by the use of guns — is there any doubt that vociferous America would have exulted — would have been thrilled?

" 'It took so long,' they say. Several of the greatest nations in the civilized world have been trying twice as long to settle a dispute by war and no end is in sight. 'They may break their compact any day and we have to fight.' Sure — but compacts settled by war do not

always hold. War means more war. Italy could not be held from the present horror. She remembered earlier wars. This war settles nothing. When exhaustion comes and arbitration begins — it will be by its wisdom that the terms of peace will be measured, not by the sons slaughtered, the villages in ruins, the debts only piled on future generations.

“ ‘It shames us to be at peace.’ Does it? Why? We have fought with our brains for the rights not only of ourselves but for all nations. We have won. The rights of all nations of the earth are firmer because of our victory. But greater still in far-reaching importance is the demonstration of what arbitration can do. It will make all civilized methods easier to use in the future. We have set peaceful ways ahead on the earth and done it at a time when all law, all humanity, all control between nations was in danger of breaking down.

“Why is there so little pride in the achievement? There seems to be but one explanation. We are civilized only in our skin — not clear through that. We don’t like civilization. We prefer to fight. We are afraid, too, of what other peoples that do and are fighting will think of us. They will think we are cowards. They and we say that ‘he who conquereth his spirit is greater than he who taketh a city,’ but that’s for the gallery. We do not believe it.

“Civilization is unpopular with vociferous America.”

Patsy was very personal about it. “That settles it,” she told Dick. “I shall never see Ralph Gardner again. He might just as well tell me to my face that I’m uncivilized.”

“She is uncivilized,” Ralph shouted when Dick reported on his questioning how personal Patsy was over

his article. "Emotionalism has made her harsh, cruel, unseeing. It is horrifying that any woman should want war — contrary to their nature. There would be no wars if women could have their way."

"You read that in a book, Ralph. Patsy is a perfectly normal woman — that is, she cries to defend those that suffer. She has the natural feminine anger towards those that caused the hurt, and she wants to fight them, to hurt them in turn. There are as many women as men in Sabinsport to-day eager to get into the war. There'll be more and more of them, and when we do go in they will be as vindictive and merciless as the men."

But Ralph hooted at the notion. "You are thinking of a cave woman, Man — not of her of the twentieth century. Women never will support war. I tell you, Patsy is not normal. Her whole nature is distorted by what she saw in Belgium. Sometimes I think she is a bit crazy."

"Jealous," said Dick to himself. "Jealous of Belgium! Lord, was there ever such a courtship!"

There were to be many of them before the war was over. Something greater in meaning was sweeping through the hearts of men and women than even their most precious personal desires. They could not have told from whence it came or what it was — this fierce, overwhelming necessity to sacrifice themselves; but they could not escape. That way only was peace and safety and honor. The loves of men and women bent before the flood. Patsy had been caught in the onrush. She could not escape — would not, though her heart was breaking over Ralph's contempt for her great, consuming passion. What she did not realize at all, and what Dick could not make her see, was that Ralph himself had in these last years been swept away by a splendid, unselfish ideal akin to her own, that all his efforts in

Sabinsport had been to realize his hopes, that the war had stripped him of his cause, and that he had not as yet found his way out of the ruins. It was all meaningless to Patsy. She could not realize that he could no more abandon his great cause than she hers, and, as he resented Belgium, she resented his absorption in interests which had never stirred her soul.

Ralph had one refuge left at this moment. It was that the party, to which four years before he had given an allegiance that was little short of a dedication, would at its convention in June again sound the high note it had struck four years before. He went to Chicago with a despairing hope that he would there hear some hearty, strong expression of faith in the things which were his passion, some definite plan for rescuing them from the maw of the war. If he did not — “Well,” he told himself, “there’s no place for me in the world.”

“Don’t count on there being anything there that you can follow, Ralph,” Dick had told him. “The backbone of that program is military, all that is modern in it is a reminiscence of 1912. Don’t deceive yourself. Your party at least is practical enough to admit that there is war on the face of the earth, and that men everywhere must deal with it, which you will not.”

The convention was a cruel ordeal for Ralph. There he saw go down not only an idol, but the group behind him, in whom he and so great a body had had faith. There he saw shattered his hope of speedily building into party gospel new and kindlier and more just practices between men, greater protection for women and children, enlarged opportunities for happy, satisfied living.

Ralph came back from Chicago sore and humble.

“It was a cowardly abandonment of something which had come to be for me a religion, Dick. I think it was the greatest thing I ever felt — that thing which

happened in 1912. It was to make, what I thought it meant come true, in Sabinsport that I've worked. It's all over. I've no leader and no party. I don't know where I am in the world. I'm utterly lost. What's the matter with me? Tell me square, as you see it. What's the matter, that I can't get my fingers on this war, that I can't feel it my affair? I believe I've got to do that, Dick, or give up the *Argus*—for the war's getting Sabinsport. What ails me?"

It was a very humble Ralph that listened to the quiet voice of the man whom he knew to be his best friend, the man who at least had never wavered in affection in these long months when the two had been so asunder in aim and in thought. Dick had taken their differences for granted, he had never disputed, never been angry. It was always possible to talk frankly to Dick without impassioned or angry rejoinders. If that had only been possible with Patsy!

Now that Ralph had fairly put the question, "What's the matter with me?" his friend did not spare him.

"Egotism is the matter with you, Ralph. You refuse to recognize that a time has come when the world has different interests from those which you think it ought to have. You have been going on the theory that the one thing that is wrong in the world is the corrupt and stupid relation between business and politics which has done so much mischief in this country. So far you have been unwilling to admit that any other form of evil existed on earth and the only way you were willing to fight this was your own way. You had selected your enemy, you had laid out your weapons. You would not consent to see other enemies or other weapons. You have considered every other interest that occupied men and women as an usurper, an intruder. The war called attention away from your fight

for righteousness — therefore it must not be tolerated. You refused even to study the catastrophe. You took the easy, intellectual way of the pacifist — war is wrong, therefore I won't try to understand this war.

"You've wanted Germany to be right because she had been right in certain things you had at heart. You picked out those things and would not see their place in her scheme. You rage at the use some of the mills and mines make of welfare work; their efforts to turn attention from a just distribution of profits, free discussion, full representation, by improving conditions. I tell you, Ralph, that is Germany's use for all her social and industrial machinery. It carries with it no honest effort to appraise the value of the man's contribution and see that he gets it; no determination to give him a free voice and a free vote; no attempt to arouse him to exercise his opinion, get from himself whatever he has in him that may contribute to the whole. It fits him into a scheme; all of whose material profits and privileges go to a selected few. Your industrial welfare jugglers are a perfect type of German rule. But you were so obstinate in your determination to have it as you wanted it that you would not see the likeness. It has been your opinion, your propaganda, your desires, that you clung to at a time when the very core of things just and decent in the world was attacked.

"Why, why should as sensible a fellow as you settle back on your particular interest in life as something permanent and essential, something to be done before anything else, and rather than anything else? How, in heaven's name, can you suppose your conclusions are the final and supreme ones? How can you expect the world to give you right of way? Why, boy, if you read your books, you must know that since the beginning, men setting out to do one thing have had to do another. No man has any assurance that the thing

to which he has laid his hand, however noble, however beneficent, may not be whisked out of the way like a toy. What is your way or mine to the sweating world? It turns up now one side and now another in its endless war for righteousness — it asks for this method now, and now for that; to-day for war by words, and to-morrow for war with fists. You can't choose either where you'll fight for righteousness or how, Ralph; you can only say you will fight for it — that much is in your power — but where? Insist on your place, and before you know it you are alone without helper or enemy — the fight has changed its field, its colors, its terms, its immediate object. Insist on your method! You might as well insist the day shall be fair. You fight in this world, Ralph, in the way the gods select for that particular day. You say you won't countenance war, but what have you waged but war? When you did your levellest to stir the wire mill to strike two years ago, what was that but war — gaining a point by force? What but war are those campaigns of yours in the *Argus*? There's many a man would prefer to face a machine gun to facing you when you've loaded the *Argus*.

“It's a hateful, barbarous thing — all war by violence is. To drive men by hurting them is war, Ralph. Hunger, contempt, ostracism, do the work as well as Mausers and Zeppelins and submarines. Don't be a fool any longer — and by being a fool I mean insisting on things you know aren't so, and on methods you know the world has temporarily flung on the shelf. That's been your trouble — clinging to things left temporarily behind. You say they're defeated — lost — that all the betterments you and your friends had dreamed are ripped from the world. Nonsense! What's going on in England and France? The recognition of the necessity of accepting as government practices many a

thing you've been turning Sabinsport upside down to get. This war is righteous in aim, and all righteousness will be shoved ahead as it goes on. That's what's happening, Ralph. Governments and parties are admitting, without contention, the need and the justice of measures they've fought for years. After the war you'll find this problem of yours half solved, and you will be forced to devise new ways of finishing the work, for believe me, Ralph, you'll never fight again in Sabinsport in the old way — you won't need to — Sabinsport is seeing new lights, dimly, but seeing them."

"And what am I to do? I'm not the kind that climbs easily on a new band wagon, you know."

"Ralph, I wish you'd try to forget the things you've been interested in; forget the Progressive Party, for instance."

"Lord," said Ralph, "I don't have to do that — it's gone — dead."

"Well, wipe your slate clean, start afresh. Take the world as it is to-day, try, without prejudice, to get at the things that brought about this convulsion. I have no fear of where you will come out, if you will but give up your idea of trying to reconstruct Sabinsport according to the formula you have laid down. Incantations are useless now, Ralph. You may cry 'Peace! Peace!' until you swoon, but you'll cry it to unhearing ears. You can say your formulæ backward and forward and wave your divining rod as you will, but it won't work. There is no magic wand that is going to end this thing. Realities are at work, and the greatest of them is the reality of hope — the hope for greater freedom to more people. When you once understand this, Ralph, you will find that you have a religion far greater than that which the Progressive Convention of 1912 gave you."

"Of course you're right, Parson. You always are.

The war has won. I've known it would some day. Don't expect much of me. It will be like learning to walk, to accept the war."

Dick thought of the phrase often in the days to come, "to accept the war," and he felt a profound pity for the ardent idealists of the land that had been dragged from their dreams and their efforts and had been forced by merciless, insistent, continuing facts to admit that war was on the earth. Neither their denials nor their horror turned the Great Invader. He came on as if they were not. They had no weapons of eloquence, of reason, of beauty, that lessened his might, slowed his step. He was Power and Life and things as they are, and they were Denial and Fantasy and that which is not.

But Ralph's effort to "accept the war" did not engross his mind nearly so much, Dick soon began to feel, as his effort to persuade Patsy to accept him — as a friend, of course! He was too humble now to think of more. Patsy's wrath at being classed with the uncivilized, as she insisted she had been, had not cooled, and Ralph, so long as he was engrossed with his hope of revival of progressive ideas, had not tried to cool it. He had determined that they could not safely meet, and, as he told Dick, he wasn't going to enliven everybody's parties any longer by quarreling with Patsy.

"You certainly will take a good deal of ginger out of Sabinsport's festivities if you do stop seeing her, but you know you will hurt Patsy."

"Hurt Patsy! I can't conceive a girl holding a man who was once her friend in greater contempt than she does me."

"Nothing of the kind. Patsy suffers over these childish breaks more than you do. She really does, Ralph."

"But I don't believe it. And no matter if she did feel it, it's no use. We've tried it out." And there

he let it rest for many weeks, while he set himself at a stiff course of reading of war documents. He had resolved to read, he said, "without prejudice, and decide in cool blood if the case justified war!" Again and again, however, as he was attempting to follow the Prussian from his start, as Dick had advised, he found himself beginning with his own advent in Sabinsport six years before and his first meeting with Patsy McCullon soon after she had taken the position of "Assistant to the Principal" in the high school. He remembered exactly how she looked as she came briskly into Mary Sabins' handsome living-room — a straight, slender figure, brimming with life and curiosity — dark, clear eyes, dark waving hair, a nose with just a suggestion of a tilt, and a mouth all smiles and good humor. He remembered how full she was of her new work — to the practical exclusion of everybody else's interests, he recalled — how she had kept them laughing with tales of the terror of her first week; her suspicion that her pupils knew more than she did about algebra and geometry and Latin grammar. He had gone away without getting in more than a word on the *Argus* and the iniquities of Sabinsport and a discomfited feeling that this young woman had made the most of her "social opportunities" to which High Town referred with such respect.

He recalled, too — recalled it with the German White Book on his knee — how, before the winter was over, his resentment at Patsy's aplomb had passed. He had learned to match her lively reports of personal adventures in her school with as lively ones of what was going on in Sabinsport's streets and factories. If she talked school reform, he talked labor reform; if she urged improved laboratories, he urged social insurance. They often accused each other of not understanding the importance of their respective tasks and

they as often giped at each other for taking these tasks over-seriously.

He remembered that he missed her when she went away for the summer and greeted her gladly when she came back. Patsy had been nice to him that second winter. She had guests from the East in the fall — "real swells" — people whose names appeared in the New York society column, and he had said to himself, "She's certainly a corker," when he saw with what genuine hospitality and with what entire absence of pretension Patsy had entertained her friends in the ample farm house, giving them all the gay country fall pleasures, quite to the horror of High Town, who would have loved to have opened its really luxurious houses and set out its really lovely china. Patsy had taken Dick and himself as her major-domos in her festivities and had thanked him warmly. "Nobody could have been nicer or more generous than you and Dick were. I knew I could count on you. It isn't so easy, you know, to keep people whose business in life is largely amusement — though they don't know it — amused every moment in a simple establishment like ours. But they really were happy, and it was largely due to you."

It had set him up wonderfully. But, after all, he hadn't seen much of Patsy that second winter. There was the *Argus* and the growing printing business which he was determined should be strong enough to support any fight he would make, no matter how costly in advertising and circulation; there had been the perplexity about how and where to attack next the duo of rascals, as he believed them, Mulligan and Cowder, whom he had beaten once, but whom he feared it was not going to be so easy to beat again. Patsy had not understood his zeal. She had been frankly disapproving.

"Why set the town by the ears again, Ralph? It makes everybody unhappy, and I don't see how your old reform victory has improved things. Of course the franchises ought to be in the hands of the town, but you must confess we get good service and not so costly. Wait awhile."

He had been very sore over that. He had made up his mind she was merely an attractive, friendly, calculating young woman. That was the way he felt about her when she went abroad in June of 1914, he told himself, as he idly fingered Cramb's little volume, which he really should have been seriously reading, if he was to understand Germany.

And now, after these two years of quarreling, how changed Patsy was from the Patsy of Mary Sabins' dinner! What a transformation from the calculating, self-sufficient Patsy he had known — this passionate, self-forgotten champion of a sorrowing people! It had only needed contact with sorrow to break down every hard strain in her, to drive from her mind every thought of pleasure and profit. It was the weak and broken men and women of that over-run land that filled her heart. And how lovely she had grown under pity and labor for others. He had stepped into a church one night, the first winter of the war, where she was telling the story of Belgium. He had done it in spite of himself, he recalled. And he could see her now, her face flushed, her eyes big and dark with pity, her hands suddenly and unconsciously pressed to her bosom as she rehearsed the story of a lost child — one she had found wandering in the streets of Brussels — a refugee child of whom no one knew the name — too little to know it himself, but not too little to cry, "Mamma! Mamma!"

He remembered how it had gripped him and how he had resented his emotion — how his pity had turned

to rage that she should be giving her strength to these distant orphans when, as he told himself in jealous exaggeration, "America's full of them." Oh, he had been a fool.

It was as Dick said, he had no feeling for any orphans but those which were included in his scheme, no sense of any wrongs but those which he had set out to right. What a drop was all the misery in America to the bottomless well of misery in Europe! And what a difference in trying to do away with misery in a land of peace and in one of war! What was all that he had been interested in beside the ghastly wrongs that Patsy agonized over! Was he never to see her again? Did she mean her last heated declaration? Could he make it up?

When a young man of Ralph Gardner's sure and lordly spirit eats his rare humble pie, he usually leaves no crumbs. He humiliates himself to the ground. Ralph was ready to do this now. He would write a letter, exposing his egotism, his self-centered narrowness. He would tell her why he was so unreasonable, so boorish. He wanted his own way in the world and resented a war that blocked it. He wouldn't see a noble reason for the war because the war interfered with his noble reason — Ralph Gardner's scheme of social regeneration. He wouldn't spare himself, he would outdo Dick's arraignment. He would lay all his jealousy and resentment at her feet, and then ask if she could be his friend again.

But his scheme of self-abasement — elaborated in the silence of his restless nights — never found its way to paper, for Dick had determined that the time had come for him to take a hand in the affairs of the two. "They must find out that they are in love," he said quite decidedly to himself, "and who's to help them to it but me? They'll never discover it as long as this

war lasts"—in which Dick was wrong, not really being versed by experience in love-making.

He decided to give a party. Now, since the *Argus* editorial on the "Unpopularity of Civilization," Patsy had resolutely refused all invitations where she thought Ralph might be, and as he was doing the same, the two had had no meetings. That must be stopped. Dick called Patsy up. "I'm giving a party at the Rectory, Patsy. I want you. Ralph will be here and that's the chief reason I want you. He is very unhappy. He has had a great blow—"

"What? What?—" stuttered Patsy. "Please tell me."

"You wouldn't understand, I'm afraid. It's a long story, and I don't believe I have a right to tell you. Just believe me, Patsy, and help me brace up a hard-hit man."

"But, Dick, you must tell me. I can't bear to have Ralph unhappy. Is anybody dead?"

"No—no—Patsy—not that. I can't tell you—" and this amateur plotter, to whom it had never occurred until that moment that arousing a woman's curiosity and possibly suspicion over the sorrows of a man in whom she was interested, was an effective means of kindling her passion, seized the opening and put a world of mystery and meaning into his tone as he repeated, "I cannot tell you."

"But I cannot meet him. You know how Ralph despises me?"

"But, Patsy, I know he does not. He comes close to adoring you."

"What nonsense! From you, too! What assurance can I have that he won't fly into a rage and berate me for knitting—for I shall bring my knitting?"

"Do—do—and I'll be responsible for Ralph. You'll come?"

"Ye-e-es."

"I wonder," said this intriguing parson, "if I'm interfering with the work of the gods, and shall make the usual mess of it."

But he stuck to his plan, and that afternoon when he dropped into the *Argus* office casually suggested that he was giving a party and that Ralph was to come. "And Patsy is to be there, and you are not to quarrel with her."

"Does Patsy know I'm coming?" Ralph asked anxiously.

"She does, and she consents."

"I wonder why," reflected Ralph.

"How should I know the vagaries of Patsy's mind," the parson replied.

It was funny, Dick told himself after it was over, the formal good behavior of the two, the conscious restraint that said louder than words throughout dinner, "I shall not be the one to offend." Patsy skated away from the war in haste whenever there was even a possibility of its getting into the conversation. She invented an interest in the condition of the girls at the munition plant, and she was gentleness itself in her questions and answers to Ralph. The girl was really touched by the change in the looks and the manner of the young man. He was paler than she had ever seen him. It was not unbecoming to the big fellow, but it was a little pathetic — to Patsy. He was quieter, less talkative, not at all assertive. "Something has gone out of him," Patsy told herself. What was it? And it was not strange at all that she should have said to herself, "There's been a girl somewhere, and he's lost her." She wondered if it could be that the girl had like herself believed in Belgium and France. Perhaps she was a nurse and had insisted on going, and Ralph had broken with her. He'd do that, she thought to

herself, with a stiffening spine which she immediately limbered, when she caught his eyes on her.

As for Ralph, he had come prepared to be very, very polite to Patsy. He would not force her attention, he would talk only about the things he knew she was interested in and he would agree with her if it choked him. But somehow he found himself talking quite freely of things he was interested in and which Patsy herself had led him to. He talked well and reasonably of the munition plants, and he didn't take a single fling at "welfare work." He was amazed how all these things seemed to have fallen into relation to other things, or, rather, how there seemed to be other things as well.

And Patsy's eyes — he softened and trembled under them. They were so gentle and half-pitying. What in the world could it mean? He knew well enough that back in that active little brain something was revolving — something about him. But never in his life would he have figured out that Patsy, as she sat quietly discussing Sabinsport factories, was building a romance of which he was the broken-hearted villain and a fair-haired nurse in France the broken-hearted heroine.

After dinner, when they had gathered in the parson's big library for a talk, Patsy had another surprise, for now Ralph was almost ostentatious in the interest he showed in Dick's war library — a collection which would have been remarkable anywhere, but which was particularly noticeable here, five hundred miles from the sea. It included files of *Vorwaerts*, of *Le Temps*, *Le Matin*, *London Times*, of political weeklies of many countries, besides scores and scores of pamphlets and books. Again and again in the past two years, Dick had urged his friend to use his library. "You have no right as a citizen of a country which is getting deeper and deeper into this thing not to follow the literature of

the war," he stormed, but Ralph had hardened his judgment — he "didn't believe in war."

Now, however, committed to an acceptance which carried with it the obligation to know and to judge, he had turned resolutely to reading. Patsy could scarcely credit her eyes and ears when she saw him pick up book after book — criticize, ask Dick's opinion, borrow, say, "I've finished this" — "I want to read that." Where was the pugnacious, intolerant, scoffing Ralph she had fought with for two years? There could be no fighting with this man. He was too meek a seeker after knowledge, too hesitant, and apologetic in expressing opinions. Certainly something had happened to him.

Two equally puzzled young people went home that night to dream and wonder. For many weeks they continued to dream and wonder. Ralph's reserve, tolerance, meekness, studiousness continued. He hadn't found himself. He was so made that as long as his faith in himself wavered, as he had no fighting objective, he could not press his interest in Patsy. She seemed as inaccessible as a new faith. And Patsy, still romancing over the girl he had cruelly driven from him because of her noble devotion to the sufferers overseas, watched his changed attitude with anxiety and hope.

And always, as the weeks went on, each was more gentle to the other. Often their eyes met questioning and fell doubting, afraid; more eagerly did they meet, more reluctantly part. Even Mary Sabins, who before the war had harbored an idea that Patsy and Ralph were "interested," but who, since Young Tom had gone, rarely noticed anybody's relations — even Mary Sabins said to Tom:

"Do you know, I believe Patsy and Ralph are falling in love, and the sillies don't know it."

Dick was satisfied with his interference. He

watched them with almost a paternal feeling. It was only now and then that a jealous pang seized him, and he said, "Why, why is there no one for me? If Annie had lived."

But Annie, after all, was a dream, more and more shadowy. The Reverend Richard Ingraham was not in love with a dream. He did not know it — he who had so often commented privately on the stupidity of his friend Ralph — but he was following Ralph's course, only he, less reasonable, was falling in love with a woman he had never seen. It would not have been so, I am convinced, if there had been in Sabinsport a single girl known to Dick that had the mingling of charm and spirit that was needed to win him. Surely he would have followed her as the needle the pole; but she was not there. The girl that did draw him was a girl overseas, a girl at whose name Sabinsport raised its eyebrows, a girl whose father had described her as "slight and fine and free moving," and whose life, as he had been learning it from her father since their first talk, showed her brave and sweet and unselfish. If I know anything of the ways of the heart, the Reverend Richard Ingraham was falling in love with Nancy Cowder — the horse-racing daughter of Sabinsport's chief pirate.

CHAPTER VIII

A REAL and sweet intimacy with Nancy Cowder had been going on in Dick's heart almost unconsciously to himself. It was natural that this should have been so. Curiosity over the girl had been awakened when Patsy McCullon came back from Europe in 1914 and gave an account of her charm, activity and associations—a picture very different from what Sabinsport had quite unconsciously drawn for him. This curiosity had become sympathetic interest when Reuben Cowder had first unburdened himself about his daughter, and this interest had grown warmer and warmer as week after week he read the letters that Nancy was writing her father from Serbia. The nature which revealed itself so frankly in these letters was, Dick realized, something rarely sweet and strong. He grew as the weeks went on to watch for the coming of the letters with scarcely less eagerness than Reuben Cowder himself, and he dreamed much more over them. The girl was taking possession of him without his knowing it. The thought of her was the most fragrant, penetrating and beautiful that came to him.

When the great tragedy came, and she was driven with the host over the mountains, Dick suffered keenly. Here again his old habit of creating a picture of the physical surroundings tormented him. The pictures of what was happening to the girl in that bleak and distracted land came before his eyes as he went about his daily work, stinging him as an unexpected shot might have done, or wakened him, shivering, from his sleep by their horrible realism. His anxiety became so great

in the early part of the year that he had almost persuaded himself to join Reuben Cowder in his distracted search, when the cablegram came that Nancy was found. Dick had a vain hope that they might come home soon, but the first letters destroyed that. It was only by long and careful nursing that the exhausted vitality would be brought back, and the girl probably would never again be able to support long strains. Reuben Cowder was ready and glad, so he wrote, to give up everything else to the care of his precious girl, even to never coming back again to America if that were necessary.

Dick had a great sense of loss — one that he did not attempt to analyze or justify — over these intimations that it might be possible that Nancy would never again see Sabinsport. When Nikola came, however, a different face was put on the matter, for he was all confidence that Miss Nancy would never consent to live away from Sabinsport, that she loved it above all places, and that the thing that was sustaining her now was the thought of coming back with her father. They had many rare talks, these two, and little by little Dick was able to piece together, down to the last and commonest detail, the weeks of danger and hardship that the little party had endured. It was a brave, brave tale, and the more he talked it over with Nikola the prouder he became of Nancy Cowder, and the quicker his heart beat at the thought of her.

Throughout the months when Sabinsport was full of anxiety over Verdun, of sorrow over Mikey's death, of more or less irritated activity over the Border troubles, Dick was daily going about her streets, sharing in her sorrows and in her perplexities, always deep in his mind and in his heart the thought of this girl over the seas.

And the girl herself — the last thing that Dick

dreamed was that she was beginning to establish an intimacy with him. It could hardly have been otherwise. Reuben Cowder had a profound sense of obligation to the young man. For the first time in many years he had had a confidant. Not indeed since his wife died had Reuben Cowder talked freely to any living being. He told this to his daughter. "He is a man," he said, "that you open your heart to. I don't know why it is, but I knew that I could go to him and say what I could say to no other man in Sabinsport, however long I had known him. You get something from him — I don't know what it is. I suppose it's sympathy and understanding. It is not what he says, but it's a very real thing, and everybody gets it, everybody in Sabinsport. When he dropped down there among us at the time of the accident at the 'Emma,' it was to him that all those poor souls turned, not to us. Jake Mulligan feels just as I do about it, and so does Tom Sabins, and so does Nikola and so does John Starrett, and even the Rev. Mr. Pepper. He's a man — a man that seems to touch everybody. I suppose he is what you call human — I don't know, but I do know that Sabinsport is a vastly better place to live in because of Dick Ingraham. Why, Nancy," he said, "I could never have found you in the world if it had not been for him. I would not have had the courage. My tongue would have been tied in my search. I don't know but that's the greatest thing that Dick Ingraham has done for me — he has loosened my tongue. Nobody ever did that before for me but your mother."

And so, day after day, as they sat on their terrace overlooking the blue Mediterranean, the man would talk of Sabinsport and of Dick Ingraham, and his daughter realized that he was seeing the world through new eyes — his town, his business, his future; and her heart grew big with thankfulness to the man that had

helped work this transformation, and more and more eagerly did she look forward to the time when she should see him, when she should know him and could thank him.

It was not until late in the fall that definite assurance of a quick return came to Dick. An exultant letter from Reuben Cowder told him they were leaving their nook on the sea for London, and that as soon as it could be arranged they would sail for home. The certainty that Nancy was coming, that he should meet her, after all these long months of intimacy with her, filled him with an unreasoning kind of dread. Might it not be that he would discover that he must give up this lovely thing that he had been treasuring in his heart? It was as if he had been growing in some shady, secret corner of his garden a delicate and rare plant, and that the time had come when he must take it into the full sun, and he feared what the change might do — feared lest it was something that could not endure the wide, roaring out of doors. There was a real dread in his heart when, without warning, one night early in December, he listened to a cheerful voice which he scarcely recognized, calling to him over the telephone, "Hello, Ingraham! — this is Cowder — how are you?" and as he accepted the hearty invitation to "come out with me to-morrow afternoon and meet my girl."

Dick found his friend much changed. Reuben Cowder had been what Sabinsport called a "sour" man, a "hard" man. He had never talked except when it was necessary, and then so straight to the point, so bluntly and finally, that those familiar with him feared his silence less than his words. He had a smile which was so rare, so joyless, that one would rather he frowned, for the smile made one sorry for him and uneasy lest one's judgment of him as cruel, greedy and

unfeeling might, after all, need qualification. He had a way of walking with his eyes on the ground. Ralph said it was so nothing would distract his attention from his eternal scheming to "do" Sabinsport. This stoop in his walk, his grizzled hair, his stern face, made him look old — a "hard old man" he was frequently called.

No one would have described him now as old, and this in spite of the fact that his hair was perfectly white — one of the results of his weeks of torture over Nancy's fate. Nothing was more noticeable about him now than that he walked erect with head well back and eyes that shone. If he talked but little more, he smiled freely and indiscriminately at all the world. The change in him was a nine days' wonder to the town. To Dick, dining at his side out at the farm, it was a miracle. "It's a resurrection of things all but dead in him," he thought to himself, "a marvel that only love and joy could work."

"I've told Nancy," said Reuben Cowder, "that you are the best friend I ever had, that if it hadn't been for you I don't believe I ever would have found her — wouldn't have had the courage and faith. So, you see, she is very anxious to see you, and I want you to like her. She's going to stay here now, she says, with me, and I don't want her to be lonesome."

"She'll never be lonesome here," was Dick's first thought at the sight of her flying across the lawn to meet the car, a half dozen dogs at her heels. And his second thought, as they stopped and she stood beside them, was her father's description of the months before — "so slight and fine and free-moving."

She was all that — and beautiful, too — a girl of twenty-four, dark hair and eyes, a high-bred face of delicate features, its fine coloring heightened by her romp with the dogs and set off by a sweater and tam as

nearly the shade of her cheeks as wool could imitate. She gave a warm, firm hand to Dick, and looking him frankly in the eye, said: "Father has told me about you. I am glad you have come to see us."

There was no question of being at home with her. She had so simply and sweetly taken him in that it was as if he had always known her. It seemed entirely natural to be walking up to the house with her, to stop on the veranda and look over the valley, lying now brown and gray with the broad river glittering through it; to go in to tea before the great open fire; to talk of all sorts of things, the latest war news, Reuben Cowder's day in town, the dogs, the telephone talks she had with Patsy, who was coming out Sunday afternoon with her father and mother, her meeting with Patsy in London two and a half years ago, the Boys' Club, Nikola, whom she had run out to see in the morning—"her first morning, too," thought Dick, with a glow of something like pride.

In the hour, which Dick was always to remember in its every detail, there was but one alarm. It was when Nancy suddenly asked:

"But how about Otto, Father. Did you see him? Isn't he here? I thought surely he would telephone me."

Dick thought she looked a little hurt, and he knew Reuben Cowder evaded when he answered, with a quick and warning look at him, "He's in New York probably. I didn't ask about him, I was so busy. I will telephone if you wish," but Nancy said, "No, he must be away or he would have been out."

It was quite as natural as everything else about it, but it raised a cloud. "She did not know, then, that Reuben Cowder had quarreled with Otto. She did not know there was a question in Sabinsport's mind about his loyalty. And could it be that she cared for

him? What more probable?" If the Reverend Richard Ingraham went home, marveling at the sweet and wonderful companionship so fully and naturally opened to him, there was a decided uneasiness running through his exaltation. Did Nancy Cowder care for Otto Littman? Would she understand the feeling about him? Would she know, indeed, anything of the stratagem and plots that the Germans had spun over the country, with what Dick felt was for the most part decidedly amateurish and bungling skill? Would she dismiss the suspicions which connected Otto Littman's name with the intrigues as unfounded and unworthy? Did she care enough to defend him, womanlike, even if it was finally proved that there was a serious, nationwide, Germany-inspired conspiracy abroad and that he was connected with the mischief-making?

It was many months before he was to have satisfactory answers to these questions. And for the most part they lay at the bottom of his mind, only working their way for brief, if troubling, moments to the top. Life was too full, too insistent, too weighty, to give time for questions that did not require immediate handling.

He saw much of Reuben Cowder and his daughter. The unquestioning, affectionate acceptance of him as part of their life that had so rejoiced and overwhelmed him that first day, continued. It was made the more delightful by the entire naturalness of the Cowders' relations with Sabinsport. Ralph and Dick discussed it again and again. The town took them in, and they accepted the town as if there had been no long black years when Sabinsport had openly scorned the man and his daughter, while it secretly feared him and envied her; or when Reuben Cowder hated them all with a Scotch hate because they so utterly misjudged his beautiful girl.

All of this seemed forgotten now — something childish, not worth recall, belonging to a day when men and women occupied themselves with lesser things. The town's suspicions had been washed completely away by the story of Nancy Cowder's noble sacrifice and brave endurance. They plumed themselves no little on the fact that she belonged to them. The change in Reuben Cowder, who, if he owned as much as ever of everything and ran it with as high hand as ever, did it smilingly and generously, wiped out fear and old enmities. And as for Nancy and her father, after you've been where they had been, resentment for neglect and misjudgment have no part in your soul.

And so the town came together in a way quite new to it. High Town and the "Emma," Cowder's Point, Jo's Mills, the South Side and the War Board began to connect up as they never had before. It was one of the strange ways in which the Great War reached Sabinsport — stretching her mind to take in facts never before known to her, softening her heart to understand and sympathize where she had been ignorant and hard.

It was time that Sabinsport grew together, for the day was close at hand when she was to be called upon to become more than a spectator in the great tragedy. She watched with somber face but steady eye as day after day the proofs piled up that she could no longer do business with Germany. Dick, watching her with the eyes and the heart of a lover, said to himself that when the day came, she could be counted on.

He was right. The day that the *Argus* reported that Germany had again torn up a pledge, that she had announced her return to the practices she had so solemnly sworn to respect, he heard but one thing as he stopped in the groceries, the barber shop, the lobby

of the Paradise, and that was, "Of course this means war."

Sabinsport took the breaking of diplomatic relations, four days later, almost in silence, but with a growing hardness of eyes and a setting of lips which meant to Dick that she could be relied upon for whatever she might be called upon to do.

It was Ralph who at this moment stirred the town. For weeks now he had shut himself away from his friends, even from Dick and Patsy. The *Argus* had been dull reading. Even those who highly disapproved of Ralph's belligerent attacks on the established order missed his outspoken talk. They had not before appreciated how much zest he had given to life.

Ralph had been giving nights and days to the hardest studying and thinking he had ever done. He had been saturating himself with the history of Europe, the philosophies of the contending nations, their ambitions and their procedures. He had succeeded in divesting himself from all personal prejudices and feelings about the war. He had achieved one of the most difficult of human tasks — a completely impersonal, non-partisan attitude toward events which thrilled with human emotion and which involved all of the deepest of human wants and human dreams. He meant to see the thing right, and whatever labor or pain was necessary to see it right he was giving. Gradually it unrolled itself before his mind — the most terrific of human dramas.

Like Sabinsport, Ralph had come to hinge his final decision of what the United States should do on whether or no Germany had still enough sense of decency and righteousness in her to keep her given word, and, when she proved she had not, his case was complete.

The day after the news came of her insolent announcement that she would resume her submarine war-

fare, a full column of the *Argus* was given to a double-leaded, signed article. It was an article of vast importance in Sabinsport, for it put into words the feelings that were within her. It became her statement of the necessity that she should at last take part in the Great War. And it gave her, too, some sense of an issue far greater than the defense of rights.

The article was headed "A Confession and a Good-by," and it began with a characteristically blunt statement: "As this is the last piece that the editor will write for the *Argus* for a long time, he is going to drop the third person and use the first. That third person always was a cramping for him as a dress suit." The piece followed.

"I have always tried to say to you as nearly as I could what I thought about any matter which it seemed to me I should discuss in this newspaper. I have often failed to say what was in my mind — sometimes because I attempted to write of things of which I did not know enough, sometimes because I was determined to force your attention to things in which you were not interested, and again because I was more interested in converting you to my ideas than in attending to my business, which was the expression of those ideas. But, whether I have failed or succeeded in saying what I undertook to say, I have tried to be frank, especially since the war began.

"I don't think there is anybody who reads the *Argus* who does not know how the war has affected me. I have tried to believe, and to persuade others to believe, that Sabinsport need not concern herself with the war. I tried to talk and act as if we could go on with our daily lives here as if it were not loose on the earth. I thought that was our duty — at least, I wanted to

think that was our duty. My persistency has been due mainly to the program I had laid out for myself for this town.

"I came to Sabinsport eight years ago with a plan for her regeneration. I do not know that a man should be ashamed of wanting to make a perfect community in this imperfect country, but I see now that a man should be ashamed of thinking that he can force regeneration on men. There is very little difference, except in the size of the field of action, between my attitude toward Sabinsport and that of the Kaiser towards the world. He had a plan for making what he thought would be a perfect world; I had a plan for making a perfect Sabinsport. And I have been in my way as narrow and as unreasonable as he.

"You have been both tolerant and kind in your dealings with me. If this war had not come, I believe that gradually some of my ideas might have been adopted in Sabinsport; but the war came and, in spite of my fierce gestures and loud shouting, it swept over us. It threw me high and dry out of the current of human activities. As long as I refused, as I did, to go with my kind and take part in its agonies, it had no place for me. It took me two full years to discover this, to understand that my wishes and my ways were too puny for the times.

"I would have left Sabinsport and probably been sulking with the few scattered egotists, who, like myself, think their individual wisdom greater than the mass wisdom, if it had not been for the one man in this community who, since the war began, has given his mind and strength to helping all men and women in this town to understand events, ideas, and aspirations as they unrolled. You all know this man. He does not think of himself as being a leader; but we all realize that it has been his wisdom and patience and suffering

that has opened our eyes. There has been nobody in Sabinsport so humble, so ignorant, or, like myself, so selfish that he was not his friend and counselor. When I finally realized the hopelessness of my opposition, it was this man who showed me the vanity and the inhumanity of my position, and who urged me to use my little training and scholarship in trying to understand how this human tragedy came about and why there was to-day no finer or nobler thing than to take a man's part in it. For six months I have been following his advice.

"I know now that this war came on the world because Germany willed it. It was necessary to her plans. It is no great trick to show from her own records why she wanted the war, why she believed she would win. Perhaps the most amazing thing about it is that while she has herself been telling us for forty years why she must have a war, we have not heeded. The few in France and in England that believed her were cried down as disturbers of the peace. As for us Americans, our stupidity has been beyond belief. There is scarcely a college or university in this country that has not its quota of men and women, educated in Germany, whose chief ambition has been to demonstrate the superiority of her scholarship and of her social system. It was her social machinery that captivated my imagination. Without ever having seen it in operation, without having any sense of its relation to her war machine, which she never hesitated to tell us was her main objective, I, like thousands of others in this country, accepted and lauded her. I swallowed her whole, because she insured her sick, her old, and her unemployed. All I knew about that I gathered from statistics and from observers who had seen in Germany only what they wanted to see.

"It has taken me all these months to realize what

Germany's invasion of Belgium meant, the abysmal depravity of it. It has taken me all this time to understand that her attacks on treaties and laws were attacks on personal freedom.

"I have only to look around in Sabinsport among our own people to see this. There is Nikola Petrovitch — a sober, honest, industrious man, who twenty years ago was forced, in order to earn bread for his wife and children, to leave a country that he loved as well as any man in Sabinsport loves America. Why should he have been forced to do this? For no other reason than that Germany and her kind wanted this land which belonged to Nikola. He loved it so well that two and a half years ago he went back, and we know what he has been through since. He and his people were literally swept into the sea by those who wanted Serbia, wanted her wealth — the things that belonged to Nikola and Marta and Stana.

"And there are many men and women in Sabinsport from many different lands, who have been forced to leave these lands. Now it is time that this kind of thing stopped, and the only way to stop it is for us to take a hand, and to take a hand at once. All the documents are in. It is for the President of the United States to declare war to-day.

"The case is closed for me. This is the last article that I shall write for the *Argus* until Germany is conquered. This afternoon I enlisted in the United States Army, and I hope soon to be doing my part toward staying the evil which I have so long denied to be loose on the earth."

It is safe to say that there was nobody in Sabinsport who took the *Argus* that did not read that article from start to finish. It is also safe to say that the one person to whom it meant a thousandfold more than to

anybody else was Patsy McCullon. She read it with exultant heart and wet eyes, and laid it down only to call the editorial rooms of the *Argus*. It was Ralph who answered the telephone.

"Ralph," she began, "I—" and her voice broke in sobs.

"Why, Patsy," he said, "what's the matter?"

And then he had a great light, and for the first time in eight months, the old dominant voice of Ralph Gardner rang out:

"Patsy, I'm coming right out. Will you see me?"

And Patsy uttered a faint and broken, "Ye—s."

Ralph flung himself into his car, and started toward the McCullon farm at a pace which made those who saw him racing by say: "Something must have happened. Wonder if there's been an accident." His lips were set, his eyes flaming, his color high, the great hour of his life was at hand. He could go to Patsy with a clear, clean purpose—the one to which she herself was pledged. However long he had been in darkness, he had reached the light. He need not hang his head before her. Was it too late? The hot heart chilled at the thought, and the firm hand on the wheel trembled so that the car swerved almost into the ditch.

It took twenty minutes to make the run for which they all counted thirty short. It was nearly supper time when he sprang up the steps. Patsy herself opened the door; cool, serene, her guards all up. Who would have thought the cheerful, welcoming voice was the same that so lately had vibrated and broken over the 'phone? Her pose was lost on Ralph. It was not this but the voice of twenty minutes ago that rang in his ears. She might fence if she would. He must know—she should not put him away. He noticed she took him into the more private parlor of the house,

not the family room where at this time Father and Mother McCullon were almost sure to be. She sensed something then, in spite of that infernal calm.

Ralph closed the door and disdaining the chair Patsy offered him in front of the fire, roughly seized her arm.

"Patsy, don't pretend. You know why I'm here. I love you. I want you to marry me, marry me now. I've enlisted. I leave next week. I want you, Patsy; want you before I go. Tell me, tell me, quick, Sweet — I must know, I must know now."

And Patsy, her armor broken and fallen at his first sentence, listened with thirsty heart. She drank the words like one whose lips are parched from long desert dryness, and answered by putting her head on his shoulder and breaking into happy sobs.

A half hour later a tea bell which had sounded twice before was rung close to the door and Mother McCullon's voice called, "Patsy, your father's getting impatient."

Patsy put aside Ralph's arms. "We must go, Ralph, and tell them."

"But you haven't said yes, Patsy."

"Why, Ralph Gardner, what do you mean?"

"But I asked you to marry me now — before I go — next week — will you?"

And Patsy sighing happily said, "Yes, Ralph; I don't think I could bear it unless I were your wife."

They went out arm in arm to break the great news, and were not a little amazed to see how much as a matter of course the elder people took it.

"It's time you two sillies settled it, I think," said Mother McCullon, tears and smiles disputing for her eyes.

"I suppose," said Father McCullon, mischievously, "we may call this the first victory of the war, Ralph."

You would never have got her if you hadn't changed your tune."

But Patsy and Ralph, looking at each other wisely, knew better. The war — why, what had the war to do with their love? Already the world-old conviction of true lovers submerged all history. Since time began they were destined for one another, and neither war nor pestilence could have kept them apart.

As Ralph demanded, so it was. Four days later there was a wedding at the farm — a wedding so simple that Mother McCullon was shocked. Both Ralph and Patsy would have it so. "We have no time for fussing, Mother," the autocratic young man had declared, and Patsy was as little concerned. She was going with him. She would find a home as near his camp as practical. She would stay there as long as practical. To make this possible without too great inconvenience to those with whom she worked in school and town, seemed vastly more important than a wedding. Were not these war times?

But a sweeter wedding never was, so Dick and Nancy and Mary and Tom Sabins and the half dozen other friends invited said. Everybody was so happy, everybody so proud, everybody so sure.

"It isn't often that I marry two people," so Dick said to Nancy as they drove back from the station where they said good-by to the pair, "without some inward doubts. I haven't a shadow about Patsy and Ralph. They will work it out."

And Nancy said confidently, "I am sure of it."

Glad as he was for his friends, their marriage and Ralph's enlistment threw Dick back again into a black and hopeless mood. If he could ease the pain of his longing for Nancy by getting into the war! If he could ease his despair from the sentence to inaction by possessing Nancy! He felt that he was one con-

demned to eternal loneliness and eternal rust. More powerfully than ever, as in the distant day when he had sought Annie and found her dead — or when in August of 1914 he had sought to make his way into the British Army and had been thrust back, he was flooded with the conviction that he was doomed never to know the great realities of life. Not a little of his ache came from the stir that Ralph's almost primitive attitude toward the war had given him. Ralph, once convinced that the future of the world was at stake, that it was at bottom a struggle between men's freedom and slavery, that the event could only be settled by war, had undergone a startling change in feeling. He was seized with a passion for the struggle. He wanted to fight — fight with weapons — with his hands — get at the very throat of this enemy of men who had so long masqueraded in his mind as their friend.

It was his thirst for battle that had made him enlist in the ranks. When Dick had first heard of this decision he had questioned its wisdom. "Why, Ralph," he said, "you ought to go into an officers' camp. You'll be needed there."

"No," answered Ralph, "I want the trenches. I'm after the real thing. I don't want to order — I want to obey. I want the essence of battle, and I don't believe anybody but the man in the line ever gets it. Then, too, I've hung back all these months, stupid ass that I was. I want to begin at the bottom. All right if I can work up, but I want to work up by doing the thing."

Dick understood. Thus he had felt in those first days before the hope of a part in the war had been destroyed. He recalled how there had been hours when he felt that nothing but the sight of his own red blood flowing would still the passion within him. Ralph was to have a chance to grapple with death and laugh in her

face — the highest thing that came to men, he somehow felt; and he would never know it.

That he had any more chance of winning Nancy than of being admitted into the army, he did not believe. She was bound somehow to Otto, of that he was sure. In the few months she had been at home he had seen scores of little things that made him think it. He always remembered with a pang the disappointment he thought he detected at their first meeting when she had asked for Otto, and her father had told her he was not in town. He recalled, too, how a few days later, when he was alone with her, she had told him of seeing Otto the day he returned; how he seemed depressed, how sorry she was, for he was her oldest, indeed almost her only, friend in Sabinsport. Dick felt as if she were sounding him. He gave no sign, only remarking that the war was sad business for those who had lived in Germany as Otto had and who had many friends there.

She had never pursued it, but she spoke freely of his visits. He never felt sure that she sensed that hers was practically the only house in Sabinsport into which Otto now went. What could make her so interested but — caring? What could make Reuben Cowder look so grim when Otto was present or when his name was mentioned but his belief that she did care? Of one thing he was sure, he must give no sign and he gave none, though as the spring days went on and the question of our going into the war was settled and Sabinsport began to prepare to take up her part, the two were thrown more and more together. It would have been harder if there had not been so much to do, and if the town had not taken it so much for granted that whatever the question, it was Dick who must explain and counsel.

CHAPTER IX

IT was this having so much to do that not only saved Dick, but it had saved Sabinsport, for Sabinsport had gone into the war without enthusiasm. She had accepted it fully as a thing she was obliged in honor to carry through, but Dick felt more and more that neither her heart was touched nor her spirit fired. He could not get over the chill that her reception of the news that war had been declared had given him — not a bell rang, not a whistle blew, not a man stopped work. "Well, we are in it," they said as they met him on the street. "It's all right." — "Nothing else to do." — "I'm for it." That would be all, and the speaker would walk away with bent head.

How, Dick asked himself, a great wave of doubt coming over him, could a town so unmoved, even if so determined, ever carry out the prodigious piece of work which the Government asked of it, at the time the declaration was made? They were to put everything in — their sons, their money, their industries, were to be conscripted. They were to be asked to change all their ways of living, and to do it at once. How could it be that a town, seemingly so unstirred, would so completely strip itself as Sabinsport was asked to do? Could this determination, which he believed was in her, carry her through the period of sacrifice and effort? Was she to have none of the help of pride, the consciousness of a great cause? How far would Sabinsport go?

The first test came when the Government announced that we were to have an army of two million men, chosen on the principle of universal liability to service. "Never," declared the Rev. Mr. Pepper, "would Sab-

insport stand for that." And there were not a few in mills and mines, not a few representatives of various peace parties, that gathered about him. They loudly declared in the *Pro Bono Publico* column of the *Argus* that we had been plunged into war against our will, that it was still possible to negotiate, that the American people wanted to negotiate, that the President was playing a hypocrite's part, that he was a puppet of Wall Street, whose only interest was to protect foreign loans and to carry on munition making. The Rev. Mr. Pepper, encouraged by the swift gathering of pacifists around him, engaged the Opera House and called for a great mass meeting of protest. Sabinsport should have a right to vote on our going into the war, if it had been denied to the rest of the country.

What would Sabinsport do? Dick asked himself the question a little anxiously. Would she foregather at the Opera House?

She would not. At eight o'clock on the evening that the meeting was called that great forum contained, not the whole town and the mines and mills, as the Rev. Mr. Pepper had been declaring all day that it would be, but, by actual count, just two hundred people, of whom the Rev. Richard Ingraham was one, for ever since the beginning of his life in Sabinsport, he had made it a practice not only to attend but to take part in all discussions, whether held in opera houses or on street corners.

But, as it turned out, the two hundred were not to be allowed to take their vote on peace or war in the orderly, quiet way which Dick himself insisted they should have, for, before nine o'clock, a great tramping was heard outside, and into the hall burst all of the active youth of Sabinsport and at least half of its middle aged. They carried banners on which were written in bold letters, "Right is more precious than peace," "The world must be made safe for democracy," "Ger-

many is a menace to mankind," "Germany wars against peace, we war against Germany." They not only carried their banners, but they brought their orators, who, stationed in the galleries and on the floor, submerged the protests of the Rev. Mr. Pepper and friends and turned the gathering into a rousing declaration that, so far as Sabinsport was concerned, she was in the war to a finish.

Each successive task the Government set provoked a similar wave of protest. For days currents of unrest would run through the town, but when the moment of decision came always Sabinsport answered overwhelmingly in favor of the Government. There was the draft. As the day of registration approached, the Rev. Mr. Pepper and his friends prophesied riots; and, if not riots, at least a very general refusal to register — but every man appeared. They came from the shops and mines and banks and schools — a full quota. It was unbelievable. Why were there such alarms of revolt before, if in the end there was to be complete acceptance? Reuben Cowder had his theory.

"I tell you, Dick, the same gang are at work in this town that stirred up the feeling against munition-making, that brought that Peace Council here and so nearly put it over. I expect Pepper and his friends to protest. That's all right, they belong here. That's the way they feel. We can gauge what they say, answer back. I rather think they're good for us, but it's not Pepper that is making the stir now. There's somebody spreading rumors of discontent that do not exist. Who printed those handbills that rained all over town the morning of Registration Day, denouncing the draft as a form of slavery? Pepper didn't. He was as surprised as the police. Why can't we get our fingers on them?"

But clever as he was, he did not get his fingers on

them. Waves of discontent, threats of riots and strikes, protests against liberty loans and food laws, continued to agitate the town, filling it with anxiety and irritation. They kept her distrustful of herself, unhappy in her undertaking, but never did they turn her from her resolve to do her full part. Indeed, it seemed to Dick sometimes as if the direct result was to drive those of the town who felt the deepest foreboding, the gravest doubt, to work the harder, thus really increasing the amount accomplished. It was this that explained why, in this admixture of irritation, Sabinsport almost always did more than her part. The rumors and prophecies that she would not respond this time nerved her to fuller efforts.

Just how things would have worked out in Sabinsport, just when and how the war would have found its way to her heart and she would have come to have the supporting uplift of realizing the greatness of the enterprise to which she was pledged, Dick never quite decided, for what did happen was so largely shaped by the news that came to them in the end of June that, in the country twenty-five miles away, the Government had decided to place one of the sixteen great cantonments in which the boys that had been drafted were to be trained into an army.

Sabinsport herself had had nothing to do with securing the cantonment. It was the only thing that had happened in that part of the State in the last two or three decades in which neither Cowder nor Mulligan had had a hand. It was certain shrewd and powerful gentlemen of the City that had persuaded the authorities that this was the most perfect spot in the Union in which to place 50,000 men.

Luckily, it was a very good spot, though probably if it had been very bad, it would have been selected, given the power that was behind its support. The land was

rolling, naturally drained, the river which flowed close by gave, by filtering, a splendid water supply. An important trunk line ran within five miles of the camp, making almost ideal transportation conditions possible, and this same trunk line ran through Sabinsport.

It was announced that the camp was to be ready in twelve weeks for 40,000 men. The town, accustomed to building in a fairly large scale, gasped in amazement. Some jeered, others protested. It couldn't be done. It would take twelve months, not weeks, to make the place habitable.

All through the summer the town watched the growing cantonment to see how things were going. The highway which ran within a short distance of the selected land was worn smooth with the cars which went back and forth. The Sunday trains were often crowded with workmen and their wives and sweethearts, and all they saw increased their skepticism. So far as they could make out, it was only a great confusion of lumber, ditches, turned-up earth, scattered skeletons of buildings; no evidence of planning. More than one observer came back to say, sagely, "They don't know what they are about. It will never be a place in which men can live. And as to being ready in September, that is nonsense."

But ready or not, they found that the cantonment was to be occupied at the time set, and to their anxiety over the incompleteness of the camp, there now was added a new concern — a doubt which was hardly voiced but which gave the keenest anxiety. It was the doubt of the recruits that began to appear. "How could you ever make soldiers of such material?" It was her own first contingent that had awakened this alarm. The town had made an effort to do the proper thing when the boys went off. They were to leave on an afternoon train, and there was a luncheon given them and a little

parade through the streets. But the pathetic thing was that these lads, who so often shambled, so many of whom were poorly dressed, all of whom were a little shamefaced at this effort to do them honor, did not look like soldiers. Sabinsport had had so little experience with armies that she could not visualize these country lads, these stooped clerks, these slouching workmen, as soldiers. She went back home not a little unhappy. How were we ever going to make an army from such stuff in time to do anything? That was becoming her engrossing thought. How are we ever going to do anything in time? Her pride was touched. And there was a real but unspoken fear in Sabinsport's heart lest we were not going to come up to the mark before the world.

There were just two people in Sabinsport — that is, two who talked and were listened to, that were not worried about the camp or the making of an army — Captain Billy and Nancy Cowder. To Uncle Billy, all these boys were the boys of '61, and every train load side-tracked on the numerous switches that the main line had provided on the edge of Sabinsport in preparation for the handling of men and materials for the camp — every train load filled him with more and more confidence. "You'll see," he said. "We were like that — just you wait."

As for Nancy, she was amazing to Dick. She was one of those rare beings of unquenchable faith. With it went an almost universal sympathy. Dick had expected to find her as obsessed with the cause of Serbia as Patsy had always been with that of Belgium, as deaf to other calls, as impatient with Sabinsport's diffused interest as Patsy was. But he discovered at once that her heart was open to every cry, and that her hand instinctively reached out to aid any human being that needed help.

She had not been at home a fortnight before she was busy planning with Ralph and Dick and her father for better housing for the girls in the factory around the Point; with Jack Mulligan for better schools at the mines. When war came she was as sensitive as Dick to what the town was going through. She realized, even better than he, how utterly Sabinsport was cut off from all outward manifestation of war, how she saw and heard none of its martial sights and noise. She was obliged to re-create without the help of outward things. It made the girl extraordinarily sympathetic. Indeed, in all Sabinsport at this period of uncertainty and alarms there was no one who kept so confident and serene an attitude or who treated with more humor and commonsense the rumors and fears that ran the streets or saw with more practical eye the things to be done.

It was Nancy who first realized what a camp twenty-five miles from Sabinsport might mean to the town — the opportunity and the threat that were in it. Nancy, it will be remembered, had been in London when the war broke out. She had seen Kitchener's army grow. She had lived with soldiers, too, in hospitals and in camps, and she quickly realized that Sabinsport had a part to play. It was to Dick that she swiftly went for consultation.

"They will be twenty-five miles away," said Dick.

"Oh, yes," said Nancy, "but what is twenty-five miles with our factories full of girls, and the town wide open? With all their homesickness and their need of friends and life, we must get ready for them."

"But how?" said Dick. "What shall we do?"

"Well," said Nancy, practically, "we women must have our canteen ready for their passing through."

But all that Nancy could say at the start had no effect upon Sabinsport. Nothing in her experience could give her an inkling of what it would mean to have

a camp of 50,000 men twenty-five miles away. The distance was prohibitive. What would they have to do with Sabinsport, with the City within five miles? It was the City's business to take care of the camp, not hers.

It was November before Sabinsport began to feel any responsibility about the camp. By that time, the boys had discovered the town. Naturally, it was the City so near them that had drawn them first, and that continued to draw them in the largest numbers. And it was the City which from the start had accepted the responsibility of guarding the boys who came to her. The City had formed great committees of men and women. She had passed ordinances, she had opened canteens. Hundreds of her homes were open to the boys, her clubs and churches and halls regularly on the Wednesdays and Saturdays when they were off. The City did wonderfully well from the start, and the commanding officer had applauded the coöperation that she gave him.

In all this activity, Sabinsport, twenty-five miles away, had not been asked to help. It was natural enough. The City always had ignored Sabinsport. To be sure, she was a nice little country town and had a quaint hotel, with a wonderful cook; the best place in the country round to motor out for supper. Sabinsport had always resented this attitude. She was the older, she had never quite gotten over feeling that she should have been the City; she who was there so many years before, and who was responsible for the discovery and first development of this wealth which now the City handled and from which she so wonderfully profited. That is, Sabinsport was jealous of the City, her patronage, the fact that she was never taken in. It was partly this that made her unresponsive to all the pressure that Dick and Nancy brought upon her in the early days of the

camp, to organize, to look after the soldiery that they felt inevitably would seek the town. Always the same answer came back: "Let the City look after them. She has not asked us to help. It's her business."

But, little by little, she discovered that, although she might make no overtures to the camp, the camp had found her out and was making good use of all she had to offer in the way of pleasure and freedom. The boys had discovered two things in Sabinsport, the two that Nancy had predicted: that she had factories full of attractive girls and that her saloons were wide open. The better sort had discovered the Paradise and High Town.

The consequence of Sabinsport's blindness and her refusal to accept responsibility heaped up every day — the girl question, as they called it. There were sudden marriages which shocked and distressed her. There were no marriages, that horrified her even more. A new type of women began to appear in the streets. And again and again on Saturday afternoons soldiers were taken back to camp, but not to barracks — to the guard house. Irritation and disgust with the camp grew in the town, and then, late in November, sickness began. It ran rampant through the camp, still insufficiently equipped with hospitals and doctors and nurses to handle anything like an epidemic. Heartbreaking tales of deaths, from lack of care, it was charged, filled the town. Nancy who, from the opening of the camp, had given practically all of her time to whatever service she could put her hands to, and who by her common sense, her skill, her sweetness, had won completely officers, doctors, and nurses, now gave herself up to regular nursing, coming back only once a week for a half-day's rest — on Monday afternoon always, though nobody at the time thought about that.

Dick practically spent his days and nights in service.

He, too, had from the start been received by officers and doctors as one of those rare civilians who can be allowed the freedom of a camp and really help, not hinder, its work.

But Sabinsport was not rallying to the efforts of Nancy and Dick. The town was horrified at the things that she saw going on. She bitterly blamed the commanding officer, the War Department, the Government. She resented the intimations that she had had from both the authorities in the City and in the camp that her failure to deal resolutely with her saloons and with the strange women who were finding shelter within her limits, was a menace to the boys. Matters were not at all helped by the kind of agitation which had begun in the town, with the hope of controlling the situation. The center of this agitation was Mrs. Susan Katcham, president of an old-time temperance organization — a good, aggressive, tactless woman, whose main effect upon Sabinsport had always been to steel even the sober to the support of the saloon.

Mrs. Katcham now had no need to argue about the disastrous effects of the open saloon. Every day was demonstrating it, to the disgust and shame of the town. There was just one man everybody knew that could put a stop to this thing, and that was Jake Mulligan, for Jake controlled the police, and Jake owned half or two-thirds of the property in Sabinsport on which liquor was sold. Mrs. Katcham went for him openly and viciously, hammer and tongs; and all she did was to make him take a terrible oath that he would not budge an inch in the matter; that it was the business of the camp to keep its soldiers at home, and not his to run Sunday schools for the protection of grown men.

The tragic thing to Dick was that he saw growing in Sabinsport out of this clash, an increasing distaste for a soldier.

"Never, never," he said, "would the heart of Sabinsport be reached until this was blotted out." But what was to be done. He took it to the commanding officer himself, and between them they laid out a plan for capturing Sabinsport's heart.

"It's melodrama," said Dick.

"It will do the work," said the General.

But that was to be done.

The execution of the plan, which the General and Dick had agreed upon for the siege and capture of Sabinsport's heart, was not easy, in the pressure and anxiety which the epidemic in the camp had brought, and its probable effect seemed to both men more and more doubtful as the friction between the town and camp grew.

It was on Christmas night that it was to be carried out. The Sunday night before Dick came home, white with weariness and despondency. He had had a day too hard for him, that he knew; one which his physician would have called dangerous. But how could it be helped? At daybreak a doctor at the camp had telephoned that Peter Tompkins couldn't live, that he had asked for the "minister." Would he go down? "Be there in an hour," Dick had answered — and he was. The poor lad was almost gone. Dick sat with him to the end, took his last message — winced, wondered, and bowed his head at the sheer, cheerful bravery with which the boy took what he called faintly his "medicine." "Didn't take care like they told me," he said. "Tell Mother they've done the best they could." But Dick knew that while the loyal fellow might take upon himself the cause of his own death, blundering orders and unthinking friends were responsible. The boys had been told to bring as little as possible to camp — only a suit case which could be sent back with the clothes they wore. Peter, like hundreds of others in that cruel

month of December had started from his home in his oldest, thinnest clothes, without an overcoat. He was going to throw everything away, he said, and not trouble to send anything back; and there had been nobody in the town with sufficient forethought and authority to prevent the risk he took. He had reached camp chilled to the bone. The supply of clothing was short. He had to go about for days in his thin, old garments. He could not get warm, exercise as he would, hug the fire as he would.

In the tremendous pressure of preparation and organization, it was impossible that the physical condition of each boy should be known to his officers. Peter had to shift for himself in those first days. He was shy and homesick. It was Dick, who was making a specialty of the homesick, who had discovered how serious his condition was and who had seen to it that he was sent to the hospital; and it was Dick who had given him the care which the one doctor and one nurse in a ward where there were two hundred very sick boys could not possibly give.

It was too late. Peter was dead, and, two hours before, Dick had seen his rough pine coffin on the platform, ready for the journey home. A clumsy wreath had been laid upon it by some sorrowing "buddy," at its foot stood a cheap suitcase, containing all the boy's few belongings. At the head a soldier kept guard. Dick's heart ached for the mother who must receive the pitiful box. And he groaned as he thought of the many, very many, he feared, that would follow it.

Sabinsport's temper at the moment weighed even more heavily upon Dick that night than the sickness at the camp. The inevitable scandal, that both he and the General had feared, had come the night before. Twenty boys, off for their Saturday holiday, had slipped into Sabinsport for what they called a "blow out."

They had gone to Beefsteak John's, one of the cheap workmen's hotels, had taken rooms, laid off their uniforms, put on pajamas and called up the barkeeper. Of course he could give them what they wanted, for they were not in uniform! And he had done it.

The scandal had been made worse by the introduction of a half dozen of the strange women who had taken up their dwelling in Sabinsport. Before morning the crowd was on the streets, rioting madly. The boys had been arrested and were in jail. The whole story was in the City's Sunday morning paper. Sabinsport was disgraced before the world.

The General and Dick had talked the matter over in the hour after he had closed poor Peter's eyes, and both had agreed that this probably put an end to their Christmas celebration. "You can see," the General had said, "how impossible it will be for me to do my part unless I know that every saloon in Sabinsport is absolutely closed. That's my ultimatum. They tell me that there's a man by the name of Mulligan that controls the town. Could you get at him?"

"I could," said Dick, "but I don't know whether it would do any good. Mulligan is obstinate. I am sure I could have persuaded him long ago to close every house he owns in Sabinsport and willingly have stood his losses if it had not been for Mrs. Katcham. So long as she continues in the field, he will keep everything open to spite her."

"I don't wonder," said the General, sympathetically. "Same here. She's been trying to force me to appoint a mother for every fifty boys. Let 'em live in the camp. Thinks I'm in league with the liquor interests because I refuse — told me so to my face. You can't do anything with such women. But you must stop the liquor selling there some way unless you want me to appeal to Washington."

Dick had come back to town anxious and disheartened. "It's a nice situation, and Christmas only two days away." He was sitting perplexed and weary before his fire, when who should come in but Mulligan himself.

"Can you give me a few minutes, Reverend?" he called, in his hearty voice.

Dick stared in amazement. "Of course," he said. "Come in." He helped him with his coat, stirred the fire, offered him a cigar, and sat down.

"See here, Dick," Mulligan began. "I wouldn't come telling anybody in this town I'm ashamed of myself but you — I am. That thing last night was my fault. If I'd ever given the boys round town a hint that they weren't to sell booze to soldiers, they'd never done it, uniform or no uniform; but I never batted an eye at 'em. I've known all along they got stuff whenever they wanted it. I never tipped the police not to see things, but I never tipped 'em to see 'em, and that's what they was waitin' for. If it hadn't been for that Katcham woman, I'd 'a' done it. I'm that mean I couldn't stand it to see her get her way. Now, she's gettin' up a mass meetin' for Christmas — think of that, a mass meetin' on Christmas. Well, I'm goin' to beat her to it.

"I control ten saloons in this town — all except the pikers — I'm closing every blamed one of them to-day — canceled the leases. I'll turn out every dog-gone man that don't shut down. And I'm warnin' the little fellows that they've got to follow suit. They're howling, but let 'em. I have told them I'd treat them square, pay them for six months. They know me. Let them sue if they want to. They know that I can prove that they've been selling to the boys. There's not a jury in the State that would give them damages. The bar at Beefsteak Jim's is closed now. I'm going

to make this town clean, so clean that the boys can play dominoes without being laughed at.

"And I've seen the Chief. I've told him if his men so much as wink at a glass of beer sold to a soldier, I'll fire him. I've told him he's to run out any shady woman that shows her bleached head in this burg, and put the camp onto any boy that tries to sneak into any mischief. I'm goin' to make this town clean, Dick, so clean all these doggone camp towns around the country that are rolling up their eyes at Sabinsport's wickedness and calling attention to how good they are and rejoicing that we've got it in the neck, will sing another song. I'll show them. And what tickles me most is getting ahead of the Katcham woman. She's not going to spoil our Christmas by her mass meetin'. When the town gets up to-morrow morning, they will find that things are shut down. I have seen to it that it gets out. Everybody will know without waiting for the *Argus*, and you ought to see what's going in the *Argus* to-morrow night. I'm letting it be known that the landlords in this town made a voluntary agreement — note that, Reverend, voluntary agreement, for the good of the army and the good of Sabinsport, not to sell another glass of beer as long as this war lasts. Don't that sound noble? Won't that shut up those neighborhoods in the State that are taking pains to say how depraved this burg is?

"I don't want you to tell anybody I had a hand in this, Reverend. Just tellin' you because I care about what *you* think, and because I want you to know the straight goods. It's goin' to be done, and so you can stop worryin'. That's got me more than once — see you lookin' so anxious. And then there's Jack. I hate to have him know over there in France what happened Saturday night. I'm sending him the paper and along with it a copy of the agreement. That's all. I'm not

going to have *his* town disgraced again. So long, Reverend, and get some sleep. You need it."

There were tears in Dick's eyes as he wrung Mulligan's hand. "You better believe I'll sleep," he said. "Now, we'll have our festival, and I'm counting on your being there. The General and his staff are coming, and we'll have a surprise which couldn't have been sprung if it hadn't been for what you've done. You've saved Sabinsport more than once, Mulligan, but you never did it so good a turn as to-day."

"Nothing in that, Reverend. Thank the Katcham woman. I had to beat her to it."

Dick went back to his pipe. He was too happy to sleep. He remembered a remark of Katie's, made months ago, and he repeated it aloud, "The Lord sure is a wonder!"

For several years now Sabinsport had had a Christmas tree on the square at five P. M. of Christmas eve, with carols and prayers and the free distribution to all the children of large and enticing stockings filled with candies. At six, almost every house in town had lighted candles in its windows. This year they were to have their Christmas tree as usual, but, in deference to Mr. Hoover, the candies and candles were to be saved. At nine o'clock on Christmas night, there was to be a community celebration, the details of which nobody seemed to know, but the program had been hinted at in every quarter of the town in such a mysterious way that the anticipation was high.

Dick and Nancy had been responsible for drawing everybody in. The mines and mills, as well as High Town, had representatives. Every quarter knew that somebody from its ranks was to do something, though what that something was was an entire secret.

Sabinsport had a wonderful place for a great com-

munity celebration — the Opera House. When Muligan and Cowder planned the Opera House they had been in their most optimistic mood. They wanted it big — big enough for conventions and expositions — “a stage on which you could have a circus,” was Jake’s idea. The result was a great, gaudy barn with a stage which would have done for a hippodrome. Financially, the size of the thing had defeated its purpose, but for a great town celebration it was magnificent. It was none too big for the affair in which Dick was interested.

By seven o’clock of Christmas night, the Opera House was packed. At seven-thirty the program began — songs and tableaux and speeches and impersonations. It went without a hitch — swift, compelling, and, oh, so merry. In an hour after it began the house was a happy, cheering crowd, helped not a little in their joyfulness by the presence of scores upon scores of soldiers, guests from the camp, and by the aid which the applause was getting from two boxes filled with officers, the General among them.

The program was almost finished — all but a single number which appeared simply as Music and Tableaux. If the audience had not been so interested, it would have noticed that up to this point there had been but the scantiest of reference to army or navy, to war or country. The very absence of these topics hushed them to silence when suddenly the orchestra broke into “Over There.”

It was like a call, penetrating, stirring. It hushed and thrilled them beyond applause. The hush deepened when suddenly, across the long drop curtain there flashed the words:—

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

The orchestra played on, every brain fitting the words to the notes:

“ Over there, over there,
Send the word over there,
That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming,
The drums rum-tumming ev’rywhere.
So prepare, say a pray’r,
Send the word, send the word to beware,
We’ll be over, we’re coming over,
And we won’t come back till it’s over, over there.”

Slowly the curtain rose on a scene that much looking in the last few months at photographs and picture papers had made familiar to them — a French town, the kind they knew the boys were billeted in, with its long row of gray-faced houses, its red-tiled roofs, its quaint church with its simple, very simple statue of Joan of Arc; and behind, rising perpetually, mountains, along which ran a highway, climbing up and up. A company of boys in khaki swarmed over the place. They were resting on their arms, waiting orders. They hung out of the windows, sat in the doorways, grouped carelessly in the roadway, swarmed over the pedestal up to the very feet of the figure of Joan.

The house watched the scene with swelling heart. Then from an upper window, there suddenly came a clear baritone. A boy, leaning out, his eyes on the little statue, began to sing a song new to Sabinsport. Alone he sang through the first verse, then the wonderful refrain was taken up,

“ Joan of Arc, Joan of Arc,
Do your eyes
From the skies
See the foe?
Don’t you see the drooping fleur-de-lis?

Can't you hear the tears of Normandy?
Joan of Arc, Joan of Arc,
Let your spirit guide us through,
Come, lead your France to victory.
Joan of Arc, they are calling you, calling you."

It was but the beginning. It had put the waiting boys in the mood for song, and the appealing refrain had scarcely died away when the tension was broken by a merry voice starting, "Where do we go from here, Boys? Where do we go from here?" From gay they swung to grave, and then back to gay. "The Star Spangled Banner" brought everybody to their feet. "I don't want to get well, I don't want to get well," set everybody to laughing. Then came "Christmas Night" and then—"Home, Sweet Home." It was almost too much for the singers themselves, for more than one lad on the stage dropped his head, unable to go on. As the song rose, so sweet, and familiar, so laden with memories, the audience sat with quivering faces and eyes grown wet. If it had not been for the emotion which had seized it, it would have been sooner conscious that there was an unusual accompaniment to the words, a rhythmical beating, which grew louder and louder until it became a steady tramp. It had grown so near that it would have broken the spell which held the house, if suddenly a bugle had not sent every man on the stage to his feet.

They fell in line, and just as the outside tramp came too distinct to be mistaken, an order, "Forward, March," came quick and sharp. They filed out and behind them came others, an interminable stream, across the stage, only to reappear, mounting upward along the road in the background. And as they started upward, at the right and top of the height, a great luminous American flag was suddenly flung out. It waved

and waved as if in salute to the mounting men. They went up, up. Their young faces, turned to their banner, wore looks of such resolve, such exultation, that the hearts of the men and women watching, breathless below, swelled with pride and hope.

The host came on, wave after wave; the orchestra played on the wrought up audience as on a viol. They broke into cheers, dropped into silence, sobbed, then cheered and cheered and cheered; and when the light gradually faded, the curtain slowly dropped, the music little by little subsided; they sat unstrung, listening to the tramping grow dimmer and dimmer until it was lost in the sounds of the town.

It was a new Sabinsport that went home that night. Whatever might happen, never again would she doubt, or close her heart to the soldier. She was his. The General, waiting in his box for Dick, said as he grasped his hand, "That's settled, Ingraham. We'll have no more trouble with this town."

But if Sabinsport had been chastened and her heart opened, she still had to grope her way into the organized service that alone could restore her hurt pride and give her some realizing sense of being a part of the great undertaking; and it was a hard moment for that.

In all the war there was not a month more difficult than January of 1918. The camp and the town were in the clutch of the most cruel weather that part of the world had ever seen. Again and again in these weeks, the miles of switches and sidings in the valley were blocked with long trains of cars filled with coal, with every conceivable kind of freight for the camp, as well as with materials needed for the shipyards and overseas. Although every effort was made to keep tracks clear for troop trains, every now and then, one filled with tired and shivering men would be held up. They sang — oh, yes, they always sang; but you could not go

among them and not know that the singing often hid frightened and homesick hearts.

The town itself, surrounded as she was by mines underlaid with coal, was suffering. Sabinsport was startled to find some of her own families in actual danger of death by freezing. In a town which all its life had been accustomed to wait until the last minute and then call up and ask that a load of coal be delivered at once, and to get it as it would get its roast from the butcher's, it was natural that many prosperous families were low in fuel supplies.

It was hard for the man of influence then not to throw aside all sense of responsibility for anybody but his family. Queer stories of the tricks that men played in order to get coal, headed for their neighbors, were told. And as for the poor, they waited in long lines, with pails and scuttles, to get their little lot, and many a time went home without it.

Unreasonably enough, storm and snow classed themselves in Sabinsport's mind as part of the war, and her uneasiness grew. Was it all to be like this — failure, sorrow, shame, suffering? Was she never to see anything orderly, sufficient, successful? Was there nothing in war that was brave, glorious and stirring? Sabinsport was seeing only the fringe of the great undertaking, and it looked ragged enough in the early part of 1918.

In all this, Dick was going from depth to depth of discouragement. Inveterate believer that he was in this town, which he had come so to love, in the country in whose institutions he so believed, doubt and despair of the outcome of the great undertaking grew upon him. We were not going to be able to handle even the physical side of it. It was not alone what he saw at home; it was what he heard from his friends in Washington. Their letters, once hopeful, became de-

spairing. "It looks to me to-day," one of them wrote him along in the middle of January, "as if the whole war machine had broken down. I have believed and believed, but the fact is we are not getting men over. It's all nonsense about our having 400,000 on the other side; there are not over 100,000. It's all nonsense about our building ships — the whole business is simply tangled up. It's an awful, humiliating failure, I am afraid, Dick. The men at the top are camouflaging the whole situation. I cannot endure it that we men back here should fail the fine fellows who gave themselves so utterly, so fearlessly."

This letter was the last straw to Dick's despair. He was overwhelmed with the futility of all the gigantic effort, sickened by the inability of Sabinsport properly to even take care of its own in a stress of weather, sickened by what he saw in the camp. Sabinsport was failing, the camp was failing, the country was failing. And why should he expect anything else? What was the human race, after all, but a set of selfish, limited bunglers?

And so, night after night, he tossed and groaned, and slept fitfully. Things grinned at him. He wakened feverish and worn. In the day things said, "What's the use? Why talk about democracy? Why talk about ideals?" And he? Why, he was an utter failure. To get into it, to have a turn in the trenches, to be soaked with filth, to be broken with fatigue, to struggle to his feet, to feel a blessed death wound — that, that was the only thing that would count.

He worked, of course; wore every day his mask of courage and good cheer; but day by day it was growing harder to keep it on. Day by day his strength was failing, for Dick, for the first time in his life, was recklessly disobeying the boundaries which had been set for his physical existence. The over-fatigue which he had

always conscientiously avoided he not only sought but coveted; the strains which he had been told might at any time be fatal to him, he took almost gladly. Finally his friends among the physicians at the camp warned him, "You will break down, Ingraham, as sure as the world if you don't take things easier." His friends grew worried. Nancy came to him and begged him to stop, to go away for a while; but he laughed at them all. In the bitterness of his soul he had come to feel that here was his way out; he could give himself here.

The break came suddenly in the hospital at the camp; one day he collapsed utterly and was taken home unconscious. An almost superhuman effort of doctors and nurses brought him around, and a month later, very white and humble, he was taken from Sabinsport to the South by Reuben Cowder himself.

His desire to die had left him. He was his normal self, save for his physical weakness. He meant to get well and come back to Sabinsport — Sabinsport, whose grief and anxiety over his illness had touched him to the heart? And he did his part. Three months later he came back — a little thinner, a little quieter, but quite himself again and capable of steady effort.

CHAPTER X

DICK'S impression, as he made his first rounds of Sabinsport after his return, was, Why, here is a new town! What had come over her? He had never pictured any such realization of the war as he sensed at every turn. It seemed to him that it was the one occupation, the one interest of everybody; and it was an orderly, systematized interest. The town seemed not only to have mobilized, but to have trained herself. She was doing her work with a vim and a freshness that he had not thought possible. The women, for instance, the women who had held off, said the City is taking care of the camp; who, as a whole, had never gone beyond the knitting stage, had been marshaled into organized groups and were working with the steadiness of so many factory hands. Since his departure a Red Cross house had gone up, and there, from eight to five every day, regular detachments served under a direction which he found was almost military in its severity. And it was a democratic house. Thursday afternoon was the afternoon "out" of cooks and maids in Sabinsport, and many a one gave her three or four hours at the tables on an equal footing with the greatest ladies of High Town.

Nancy's canteen, which had met so poor a response when suggested, could be counted on now, night or day. It was no unusual thing for 2000 tired boys to be served at four A. M. with coffee and food at the headquarters by the track.

It was amazing the women that could be called on for this severe duty. There was a little manicurist at the Paradise — a saucy, competent, flirtatious person, that went into the canteen organization for night work.

Three nights a week, from nine at night until six in the morning, she was ready for call, and again and again she would serve her full time, and, after two hours' sleep, go back to her table, a little pale perhaps, but never any less skillful, any less flirtatious. And there were the greatest ladies of High Town that enlisted like the little manicurist for night work and did it as faithfully.

Dick found that not only the women were working but that the war spirit among them was hot, even fierce. He dropped in one afternoon to the Woman's Club to hear the story that an Eastern journalist, lately returned from a trip along the front, had to tell. As he watched the audience, a large proportion of whom were knitting — for Sabinsport's Woman's Club had come to the point where it was stipulated, when bringing on a lecturer, that he should not object to knitting — he recalled the discussion he had had a couple of years before with Ralph.

Ralph had insisted loudly that it was nonsense to talk in America about war, that the women would not stand for it, that they would riot first. Dick had answered, "Ralph, that is something you read in a book. If you knew women and knew history, you would know that when the test comes, they not only will 'stand for' war, but they will be violent supporters of war." Ralph had accused him of being out of touch with the modern world, of not knowing anything of the "New Woman." This conversation ran through his mind now as the speaker told the story of the first gas attack by the Germans, of the deadly effect it had had on the unprepared English, and then remarked that the English now had a more deadly gas invention than anything that had come out of Germany. He was almost startled by the applause which rang through the room. Practically

every woman took part in it; the knitters dropping their work to clap.

The speaker went on with stories of how our troops made their first attack. "Nineteen dead Germans," he said, "to six dead Americans." Again the room rang with long clapping and cries of, "Good boys! Good boys!" Not a tear, not a bowed head; but pride — fierce pride, and vengeance.

"I was right," thought Dick. "Ralph read it in a book, not out of life."

Again and again Dick noted profound changes in individuals in the three months in which he had been gone. None of them moved him so deeply or gave him so much joy as that in Mary Sabins, who was now regularly installed as a nurse's aide in the hospital at camp. Her face wore the look of one who had struggled to a high mountain and from the top was looking into a new and glorious world.

Mary had been a very unhappy woman in the months since Young Tom had left her for France. It was not only the shock of his going, but it was the still greater shock that her husband had refused to use his authority at her request and forbid the boy's going away. For the first time in their married life of some twenty-five years, a strain had come between them. Tom Sabins could not understand why Mary did not feel his pride in the boy's courageous and adventurous spirit. She should not understand why he did not resent the invasion of their snug and comfortable world.

When the war came she was still further bewildered by the change that came over Tom. Every business and social occupation that had engrossed him, the pleasures to which he had been so devoted, he threw them aside as completely as the boy had thrown over college and home. It was Tom Sabins that had been asked to

head the draft board of the community, and Mary had never seen him so engrossed or so interested in anything. "Why, why should he give his days to men of whom she had never heard? Why should he be so eager, so enthusiastic, so indefatigable, in this work?" Mary watched him with resentful eyes.

Dick had talked frequently with Nancy about their friend, and the two had tried their best to interest her in some form of camp work; but she had refused peremptorily to be enlisted. And here she was now, going regularly day by day to the hospitals.

"Tell me about Mary Sabins," he asked Nancy, the first Monday afternoon after his return that he was able to go to the farm.

"You know, of course," Nancy said, "that just after you left Young Tom was invalided home. He went into the Foreign Legion when our forces took over the ambulance service, and got a nasty wound in the cheek and shoulder almost at once. It was nothing dangerous, however, but it was very hard for Tom to make Mary believe this, and she raved at her inability to go to him. He got on famously and soon was allowed to come back. You never saw any one so exultant as Mary was when Tom first came. It seemed to her, I think, that her old world, at least part of it, was restored; but it was pitiful to see how soon she discovered that Young Tom's notions of life were utterly changed, that the interests which had absorbed them in the old days had no meaning now; that his one thought was of the war, and his one hope was to return to it.

"I saw her get two or three staggering blows, utterly unconscious, of course, on the boy's part. One night I was there, and he was talking about American girls, the nurses and canteen workers. 'Why,' he said, 'I didn't know women could be so wonderful. You haven't any idea of it until you see them working over

there. They are not afraid of anything. You cannot tire them out. Maybe they will drop, but they won't give in. Afraid? Why, the Germans bombed the front line hospital I was in, just after I got mine, and those girls never turned a hair, never looked up, never hustled, just went about laughing and cheering us up. They killed two of them — the murderers! And there wasn't a woman there that did not stick. It's great. It's great to know that women can be like that.'

"You should have seen Mary's face. It was tragic, and Tom was so unconscious. Then, her second blow came when she knew that he was going back. You see, she hadn't an idea but what this would mean that that was the end of it. I think she had some notion that he would not want to go back; that getting hurt would kill this strange, unfamiliar thing that possessed him. Mary is like so many of us American women. Certainly I used to be so — afraid somebody will get hurt — afraid of suffering. Why, I cannot see that you can know much about life unless you suffer, and see suffering. Mary could not understand it. When Young Tom really was all right, which was very soon, he went out and enlisted — enlisted in the Marines.

"Mary went all to pieces. Of course Tom stood by the boy. A week after he was gone, she came out here one afternoon. 'Nancy Cowder,' she said, 'do you think I could be used at the camp?'

"'Oh, Mary,' I told her, 'if you only would go to the camp, we need you so.' She looked at me in such a curious way.—'Need me? What for?' 'The boys need you,' I said. 'We cannot do for them the hundredth part of what we ought. Boys like Young Tom need you. You should be doing here, Mary,' I said, 'just what other American women will be doing for Young Tom.'

“ ‘ I think I must try,’ she said. ‘ I have discovered I have lost my husband and I have lost my son. I don’t understand what they are talking about. I don’t understand what they feel. They have no interest in me and no interest in what I do. I don’t know that I can ever get them back. But I must have something to do.’

“ Well, I sent her into the city for a course as a nurse’s orderly. She made a great discovery there. And, oh, the things she has learned since she has been working in camp. You can see from her face that it’s a new Mary. And Tom — Tom is the happiest man in the world, though Mary, I think, doesn’t know it, yet. The clouds have not all cleared off her mountain top, but she is there. War is a dreadful thing, a hideous, wicked thing, but there are some of us that have discovered the greatness of life through it.”

A new attitude toward the conduct of the War had come in Sabinsport, too, Dick remarked. When he had left, the town had been alive with disheartening rumors of failure, graft, inefficiency. The meetings of the War Board were given over to them. Captain Billy, than whom nobody in all of Sabinsport was more desirous that the country should make a record for itself in the war, was doing his utmost to prevent that end by decrying loudly everything that was attempted. Mr. John Commons was having the time of his life. Never had he been able to reduce so many people for so long a time to despairing doubt of all human institutions as at present. He could scoff, and not be contradicted, at the absurdity of an untrained, democratic body raising a great army. He could sneer, without answer, at the notion of the United States — soiled as its hands were with stealing from the Red Man, from lynching the negro, from gobbling up innocent Panama — setting out on a crusade “ to make the world safe for

democracy." Mr. John Commons was certainly having a wonderful time, when Dick went away.

But all this had changed. To his amazement, he found that criticism of the Government, any doubt of a war enterprise, any reluctance to accept at full face value any request of the Government, was met in Sabinsport with a fierce declaration that it was all German propaganda.

"What has happened?" he asked Reuben Cowder. "What turned the town in this direction? When I went away, the easiest thing in the world was to get a hearing for a criticism, sympathy for a sneer. What has done it?"

"Well," said Cowder, "Sabinsport discovered that it was being 'worked.' You know I have always suspected that that was true. You remember how we talked, back in 1915 at the time of Labor's National Peace Council, how I told you that no such organization could thrive in Sabinsport when there was plenty of work without outside feeding. And you know how for a year or so after that went to pieces, pro-German talk was not very popular. After we went into the War it revived. The town was alive with distrust, and I was sure, just as I was about Labor's Peace Party, that there was somebody feeding it. You take the negroes; why, they almost came to the point of revolt here against the war. Nancy had a cook out at the farm that came home from one Sunday afternoon meeting to tell her that she 'wan't goin' to save food any more; that all the United States wanted it for was to make slaves of the negroes again, that if Germany came over here, she would keep them free.' There was a regular campaign here against the Liberty Loan and thrift stamps. And when the women took their registration for service, the idea was spread around among all the more ignorant people that the women

were being registered in order to be taken to France to cook and work for the soldiers.

"Now, things like that don't start out of the air, and I set out to find out where it came from. I got a clever fellow here that I have had before when trouble was brewing in the wire mill, to sort of sound out things, you know. Well, he had not been here long before he came to me and said, 'Mr. Cowder, Uncle Sam has told me to get off this job, wanted me to tell you that you need not worry, that they were looking after it.' They must have been confounded smart, these Secret Service people, for I've never yet been able to find out who they were, except one, nor what they did. But this is what happened.

"Along the first of March, a fine looking chap came into my office one day, and asked to see me alone. As I shut the door, he showed me his badge — Secret Service. 'Mr. Cowder,' he said, 'I want to notify you that about a half a dozen men in your munition plant, one of whom you have trusted greatly — Mr. Max Dalberg — will disappear from this town, day after to-morrow; or, if not, the next day. I would like to tell you the facts, but I am under orders to divulge nothing, even to you. I think you and your plant will be safer if you know nothing of it. We would like to have you make no comments, but carry on your work as if nothing had happened. That's what the Government asks of you.'

"Well, Ingraham, you know how I felt about Max. I would have trusted him as soon as any man in this town, much further than I would Otto Littman. As a matter of fact, it has been Otto that I suspected all the time, as you know. But Otto is here. Moreover, the same young man that warned me about Max came back a week later and said to me that he thought that it would be an act of justice and humanity to

support Otto Littman in the town, not to let suspicion drive him away. I cannot make head or tail of it, Ingraham. Only this I know, that Max did disappear, along with half a dozen of the best workmen we had; that Otto is still here. Moreover, the rumors, the criticisms that filled the air, have stopped. That fellow told me they would. He told me that it was out of my own factory that these things had been coming. The town somehow got wind that something had been going on, that the suspicion and criticisms which ran through the streets were spread by German agents, and to-day a criticism which is perfectly well founded has no chance at all. You cannot even joke about the conduct of the war without running the danger of arrest. Why, the funniest thing happened here the other day to John Commons. You know Katie Flaherty, of course — takes care of you, doesn't she? Well, Katie overheard John Commons criticizing a report that the Government was going to forbid the use of starch in collars, make us all wear soft collars. 'Ha, ha,' Commons said, 'I suppose they want the starch to stiffen up the backbone of the soldiers.' Katie was so incensed that she promptly went to the Chief of Police and reported Commons. He was waited on, and it took some real explanation and expostulation on his part to keep out of jail. It tickled the town to death, and John has not been nearly so voluble since.

"Yes, there's a great change come over our spirit, and I would give a good deal to know just what was done, what became of Max, what he was planning, and how they got him."

What became of Max, what he had planned, how they got him, was known to only one person in Sabinsport. Offhand you would have said that that was the last person to keep a secret, for it was Katie Flaherty.

Since Mikey's death, the real occupation of Katie Flaherty's life had been hate of the race that she now considered her personal enemy. Dick had sometimes chided her for this bitterness. "God forgive us all, Mr. Dick," she would say, "I have been saying we ought to love everybody. Take the Jews, now. See how they have gone into the war, how loyal they are to the United States. I tell the boys we ought not to lay it up against them any longer that they are Jews. But a German, Mr. Dick, that's different. He won't salute the flag. And look at the things they do — sinking the ships like they did. Think of all our grand, lovely young men drowned in the sea — the dirty Germans — sticking a ship in the ribs in the night. I can't stand it to think of 'em dead. I'm that foolish about the boys, I can't see one in the streets I don't cry, old fool I am. I won't never go to another parade, Mr. Dick. You'd been that ashamed of me if you'd seen me at camp when they came marching up the field, the thousands of 'em, the grandest boys you ever seen. I couldn't see for cryin' and it wasn't still cryin' I did. I did it out loud — but nobody laughed, only a strange man patted me on the back and a woman went white and said, 'Stop it!' fierce like, 'Stop it!' so I came home. I'll never go to another parade.

"And to think the Germans have the heart to kill 'em — boys like ours. I'm fer drivin' 'em out of the country. They're all spies. There's the butcher over on the South Side, Johann he calls himeslf. Think of that Johann in the United States — a regular old German, talkin' about the 'faterland' — can't say it in English."

"Come, now," Dick said to her once. "Johann has been in this country for forty years."

"What's that, Mr. Dick? They're all the same; you can't make Americans out of 'em."

She developed a suspicion of strangers that was almost a mania, and was forever watching for evidence of intrigue. One morning she came in to serve Dick's coffee, with a big envelope in her hand. She was handling it gingerly as if it was something that might explode. With great solemnity she opened it. "Look here, Mr. Dick. It's a spy I found. I'm sure of it." Out of her envelope, she pulled a big red valentine, and dramatically turned the back to him. On it was written in bold black letters the words, "Don't buy a Liberty Bond. The Kaiser says so."

"Why, Katie," Dick said, "that's no spy's work, that's a joke." But it took much explanation for Katie to see it. "Don't buy a bond"—that to her was treason. "The Kaiser says so," more treason. Finally she gave in to Dick's persuasion, and she went off saying, "It's a fool I am," but Dick always had a feeling that he had not quite convinced her.

Katie's watchfulness and her self-imposed task of bringing every suspicious person to justice was known to everybody in Sabinsport. It had long been known particularly well to the strange young man who had appeared in Reuben Cowder's office early in March and warned him of approaching changes in the force at his munition factory. Other things concerning Katie were known to this same young man, and one of them was that she had a room to rent on her first floor.

The floor opening onto the upper level, ever since Mikey went away, had been rented by Mr. Max Dalberg. Downstairs, opening onto the lower level by a little side door, was an extra room which Katie had said recently for the first time to herself she would rent if she had a chance. She had not put out a shingle but she had told her neighbors, so it was not surprising that one morning when she was busy in the rectory that

there should have been a knock at the door, a call for Mrs. Flaherty, an inquiry about a room to rent, and a bargain promptly made.

Katie took to the applicant — a jolly, clean, keen-eyed American boy, older than Mikey but with something about him that suggested Mikey. Himself a grand fighter, too, Katie had said to herself. Her new tenant was John Barker, by name.

"I'm only at home through the daytime, Mrs. Flaherty," he said. "I'm in the mines, an engineer, running night shifts. I won't be in before eight or half-past in the morning for I get my breakfast over there. I want a quiet place to sleep through the day, and I will be off by five in the afternoon. If you want any references I can give them, and here's a week's rent in advance."

And Katie, to whom paper references meant little, and the look in a man's eye everything, had said, "It's all right, Mr. Barker, I will have the room ready to-night and you can come in in the morning. You will find the key with Mary O'Sullivan next door."

And Katie that night, when she went home, made the little room clean and tidy, put the key to the outside door with Mary O'Sullivan, describing her new tenant with enthusiasm.

He proved a good tenant, none better. He came as regularly as the morning and went as regularly. His presence in the house was quite unknown to the gentleman who occupied the top floor, and who had long congratulated himself on his luck in having a lodging over which he had such absolute control. As a matter of fact there was only one entrance to his upper floor, save that on the street. A rude little staircase ran up from the kitchen into a tiny square hall, and a door opened into the room which had been Mikey's.

It was by this door that every afternoon, when Katie came home from Dick's, she went upstairs to make the rooms. Max's habits were very regular — exemplary person that he was. He was at the munition works at seven and never left until five. His doors were carefully locked behind him. He had no need to concern himself about anything in Katie Flaherty's house.

But in this secure dwelling, strange things were going on in those hours when Max was at his laboratory and Katie at the rectory. Every morning, promptly at 8:30, a quiet, tired looking young engineer unlocked the side door of Katie Flaherty's house, and drew his curtains.

But once the curtains were drawn, an extraordinary transformation took place. The fatigued face became relaxed, the heavy, dirty boots were replaced by the softest of slippers; two very dangerous looking weapons were slipped into his belt; and in the big pockets of his soft sack coat something that looked like a pair of handcuffs. And then, with keys in hand, he quietly slipped up the back stairs, opened this door and began an investigation of the belongings of Mr. Max Dalberg, Reuben Cowder's "wonder of the laboratory."

And the things that he found! You could tell that by the glint of victory in his eye, by the moments when he would straighten himself and address the air in a whisper, "Could you beat it?" When he would noiselessly tap his thigh and say, "It's the completest thing I ever heard of." The young man was making out a pretty case in Max's secure chamber, little by little, from the papers and photographs which he examined with such scrupulous care day by day, always leaving them exactly as he found them, taking infinite pains not to leave behind him any trace which might make Max suspicious that his privacy had been in-

vaded, and he gathered the proofs of as fine a piece of destructiveness as any planned within the borders of the United States by the band of plotters that Germany had sent out.

What young Mr. Barker found was simply this — a carefully laid scheme, every detail worked out with German efficiency, to blow up simultaneously every munition plant in that great district around Sabinsport, where now literally millions of dollars' worth of shells and shrapnel and wires and guns were being made for the Allies.

Max had been very ambitious. He had not been simply content with doing away with his own plant. He had placed in every one of the neighboring towns agents that he could depend upon. By months of the most careful plotting and arrangement, he had coached them in their part. Oh, it was to be a dramatic piece of frightfulness. The very day was fixed. Two weeks from the time that young Mr. Barker finished photographing the last piece, at ten o'clock at night, there was to be one grand explosion, running along the river for miles, back into the hills north and south — a piece of destruction that would not only rip every wheel apart but shake the valley, tumble down its buildings, set fire upon fire, drive men and women from their homes, murder, destroy. It was the monstrous German imagination for destruction at its highest — a great conception. Again and again young Mr. Barker had to stop in wondering admiration at the perfection of the scheme. "God!" he said, "and to think we have got him!"

But now the time had come when he had to have help — the help of Katie Flaherty. He knew he could count on her. He realized nothing would ever quiet the pain in Katie's heart but to get her German, to give blow for blow. And so one day, after records and

photographs were complete, after they had been spread before certain high authorities in a near-by city, Katie had another call from her roomer. It was the first time she had seen him in weeks.

"And what is it, Mr. Barker? Is something going wrong? Did I forget your towels?" she had greeted him.

"Not at all, Mrs. Flaherty," he said cheerfully. "You never forget anything. You are the best landlady I ever had. But there's something on my mind, and I want your help. May I have a talk with you?"

And, seated in the kitchen of the rectory, he laid before her the outline of what he had discovered. He showed her the big silver badge that he wore beneath his coat, and told her what he wanted. Briefly, it was her coöperation in arresting Max. She had listened, amazed, unbelieving, and then, as the truth dawned upon her, horrified. And when her help was asked, her whole bitter hatred blazed up in a passion of desire. Here was her chance! She'd get her German. But how were they going to do it?

"Do you ever go up to his door of an evening?" he asked her.

"Every night at nine o'clock, I rap and give him his pitcher of fresh water, and sometimes, when I have it, a bit of fruit. He has always been such a quiet, gentle soul, playing his piano and singing his songs — I can't believe it's true."

"It's true, Mrs. Flaherty," said young Mr. Barker.

"What is it you want?"

"Simply this. I will not leave as usual to-morrow afternoon. I will be in my room. At nine o'clock, there will be a knock at your door, and you will let in two men, with a hearty, "How do you do, I am glad to see you." Then I will ask you, Mrs. Flaherty, to go ahead of us up to the door, knock and give Mr.

Max his pitcher of water. And then, Mrs. Flaherty, we will take care of him. Can you put it through?"

She looked him in the eye, and young Mr. Barker had not the shadow of a doubt but that he could count on her.

It is doubtful if Mrs. Flaherty could have ever told you what she did in the thirty-three or thirty-four hours between the time that Mr. Barker closed the door of the rectory kitchen and the hour when she admitted two stalwart strangers, with an Irish laugh and greeting that, if the windows above had been open, could certainly have been heard.

The windows were not open. If they had been, Katie might have heard an angry altercation going on. When she and the three men, fifteen minutes later, slipped up the stairs as noiselessly as so many cats, they heard it; and Katie knew the voice that was raised to meet the lower, cruel tones of Max. It was Otto Littman's.

How well she knew it! For thirty years Katie had given her services at every dinner that the older Mrs. Littman gave. She had helped at every birthday party. She had known Otto from the time he was put in his mother's arms. And her heart almost stood still. The hand that held the tray almost trembled as she realized that this was Otto — the son of her good friends, the only Germans in all Sabinsport she had never suspected — who was talking. She did not know what he said, but young Mr. Barker knew. He knew from what he heard that Otto had gotten some inkling of the horror devised, that he was protesting, threatening, declaring that whatever it cost him, even if it were his life, he would reveal the horrible thing. Either Max must call it off, or he, Otto, would stop it. And the even, calm tones of Max had said, "Too late, Otto. It's you that will be silenced, not —"

At that moment young Mr. Barker gave a nod to Katie, who, knocking loudly, called out in the most natural and cheerful of tones — so natural and cheerful that he said to himself, "Isn't she a wonder?" — "Here's your water, Mr. Dalberg, and an apple."

And Max Dalberg, intent only on keeping up an appearance, opened his door, and, as she stretched out her tray, there appeared in his face over her shoulders the muzzles of two vicious looking guns. At the same instant the door was thrown open and two powerful individuals had him by the arms, and cuffs on his hands and cuffs on his feet.

It had all been done so quickly and so quietly that neither Max nor Otto had uttered a sound. Nor did any one for a moment. Katie slipped down stairs. Young Mr. Barker in his level voice said, "Mr. Littman, I have heard your conversation, so have these gentlemen. We all understand German. It lets you out. You may go."

Otto, looking him in the eye, said, "I am willing to take my punishment. You will find me at home when you want me. I have some letters which may help you; they are all at your disposal."

The exit of Mr. Max Dalberg from Sabinsport was very quiet. An automobile drove up to his door on the upper level, as it often did in the evening, and three gentlemen came out of the house. If there had been anybody to watch, they would have noticed that the one in the middle was being supported. They might have thought him ill. He was helped into the car, and thus departed from Sabinsport the "wonder of the laboratory" of the munition plant. And thus ended his magnificent dream of frightfulness, for at the same hour that he was being quietly conveyed in a comfortable car out of Sabinsport, various other gentlemen in vari-

ous other towns belonging to this grandiloquent scheme were undergoing the same experience.

Katie slipped back to her kitchen, and her face was wonderful to see. It was the face of the righteous warrior with his enemy's head in his hands. It was the look that all the Celtic Flahertys and O'Flahertys from the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasion, through the days of the Cæsars, through all of the centuries of England's injustice to Ireland, had worn. It was the greatest moment of Katie Flaherty's life.

There was only one fly in her ointment — she could not talk about it. She could not tell Mary O'Sullivan or Mr. Dick. The hardest thing that could ever come to her was the seal upon her lips. It was not that Katie wanted to talk about her part in this thing, that had nothing to do with it. But it was to tell of the battle, to tell of the defeated enemy; it was to tell of the revenge! It was a wonderful story, and all her Irish imagination cried out to depict it to her neighbors. But she had given her promise to young Mr. Barker, and, clever man that he was, he had put a flea in her bonnet which he knew would ensure absolutely closed lips. "You will not, Mrs. Flaherty, give one hint of what has happened. Your roomer upstairs is not the only German connected with this business. The capture of others depends upon absolute secrecy about what has happened to Mr. Dalberg."

So Katie, in this cruel trial of silence, was sustained by the hope that she might get another German scalp.

This was the reason that, when Dick came home, no hint of what had happened was given him, though there were mornings when Katie Flaherty would gladly have given her good right arm to have been able to have opened her lips and pictured the whole magnificent scene.

Now, it is not to be supposed that interested and

heartened as the Rev. Richard Ingraham really was in all these changes that had come over Sabinsport, that they either satisfied his heart or filled his mind. Night and day, one thought absorbed him, stronger than all others, one feeling mounted higher and higher. He thought he had put behind in the weeks of rest in the South — his love for Nancy Cowder. He thought he had had it out with himself. He believed he had made his renunciation, that he could come back, work with her in camp and town, go out as usual to the farm on Monday afternoons, meet her easily and naturally everywhere, even see outwardly unmoved the day come which he believed thoroughly would come, when she would marry Otto Littman. And, though it is improbable that he could have gone through the ordeal with anything like the control and certainty that he had persuaded himself was possible, yet such is my confidence in the man that I believe he would have put it through if, when he returned, he had not divined, rather than learned, that there had been a great change in the relations of Otto and Nancy.

It was not a change, so far as he could judge, from which he had a right to draw hope. He told himself again and again that, on the contrary, the change probably only meant that later, when the war was over perhaps, when suspicion of Otto had passed and Nancy was released from her labors in the camp, that again they would seek each other; yet the fact that at this moment they were not seeking each other, that so far as he could make out, they were not seeing each other, gave Dick an unreasoning encouragement. In spite of himself, his dreams came back. In spite of himself he saw more and more of Nancy Cowder.

What had happened with Otto, he could not make out. Otto still remained in town. It was certain that Reuben Cowder, as well as other leading men who once

had shunned him, were taking pains to support him. It was evident that a great burden had been raised from Rupert Littman's heart. Never had he been so affectionate, so proud of Otto as now. That is, at the very head of Sabinsport business, where suspicion of Otto had first begun, there had been a great change. These men, if you asked them, would tell you that they knew it to be a fact, from the very highest authority, that Otto Littman had rendered the Secret Service of the United States a tremendous service; they knew it to be a fact that he had run the danger of losing his own life in order to save the lives of others. That was as far as they would go — as a matter of fact, that was as far as they could go. But the authority on which these facts were stated was so unimpeachable that there was not a man of them that doubted, and there was not a man of them that was not doing his best for Otto.

But this had not won him Nancy Cowder, Dick found. A change had come over the girl. She was much quieter. But that might be because of her continuous work at the camp; work which she never left, which, whatever the effort and the strain called for, she always gave. Reuben Cowder was anxious about his daughter, with good reason, and one of his first requests of Dick on his return was to try to bring her to her senses.

And yet Dick in his foolish heart argued that it was not the work at all, that her pallor came from pain over a break with Otto; and though many a night he had wild fancies that this was not so, he always told himself in the morning that he was wrong, that it was only a matter of time when the breach between them would be healed, that it was his business to keep away from her.

And so, through weeks of labor, Nancy and Dick

steadily went their ways, each unconscious of what was in the heart of the other, each valiantly resolved that they would make no sign that would hurt the other, and yet daily each growing closer to the other.

CHAPTER XI

IT is only when one loves a town as Richard Ingham loved Sabinsport that one is conscious of the currents of unrest, of groping, of joy and of grief that fluctuate through it as truly as they fluctuate through the soul of man or woman. Love makes one sensitive — sensitive to fleeting shadows that others never see, to secret hopes and faiths that others never know. Dick had not been long home before he began to understand that Sabinsport, hammering at her war tasks like a Vulcan, hating her enemy as robustly and openly as any primitive deity, still was restless in heart, dissatisfied with the war, untouched by its loftiest aims and hopes.

Something more in experience must come to Sabinsport, thought Dick; and he sometimes wondered if it would have to be a baptism of blood. She would stick — stick to the end, he felt. Indeed, he did not believe that all the nations of the earth combined could pry Sabinsport now from the task to which she had put her hand. But he wanted more from her in carrying out this task — a fuller sense of the bigness of the thing in which she was engaged. Where was it all to come from?

As the spring drive of the Germans pounded back farther and farther the English and French lines, the anxiety in Sabinsport grew, intensified. Out of it Dick saw coming one emotion that greatly rejoiced him. Sabinsport, through all the war, had never any very strong feeling for England. To Belgium and France she had given her heart, a little of it had gone to Serbia, England never had won more than a slightly grudging

recognition; but now, when that amazing army stood with its back to the sea, and the world realized that though every man might fall, no man would surrender, something broke in Sabinsport.

For the first time she realized something of the fullness and the nobility of the English sacrifice — how with characteristic English quiet, the nation had put everything in and called it a "bit." To Dick, whose love of English hearts and English ways and whose faith in the unconquerable English soul was second only to his love and faith in America, this belated understanding of England by Sabinsport gave both joy and hope. She was beginning to see things. They were getting down into her soul.

As the days went on and the Germans drew nearer and nearer to Paris, as the city was actually shelled, and as rumors came of preparations for a siege, with all the doubts they brought of its being possible for her to long withstand it, something like panic seized Sabinsport — an almost angry panic. Where, where were the Americans? For what had she been making all her great effort? Why, but to stay the invading hordes? Were we too late? Were these hundred thousands of men that we boasted now of having landed in so short a time, to come in only in time to see the destruction of France and the certain invasion and destruction of England, which Sabinsport believed that would mean? Doubt and anger and horror possessed her.

And then suddenly the American army did appear. There was Cantigny, and then, in the very nick of time, the last moment, when the wearied and overwhelmed French were actually in retreat, our boys came — Sabinsport's boys; and, careless of the long journeys which had brought them to the spot — the sleepless hours, they broke over the foe, beat him down, beat

him back, followed, defied, laughed at his boasted formations, his impregnable trenches, his deadly nests of guns. It was true, as the most experienced and hardened French cried, *Rien les arrête* — Nothing stops them! Nothing stops them!

When the story of Château-Thierry came back to Sabinsport, men shook one another's hands, clapped one another on the back, told over and over every item they could gather. Captain Billy walked up and down the street, not ashamed of tears, crying, "I knew they would do it. Just like the boys of '61." They treasured every story of reckless exploit, of daredeviltry. "That's our boys. Just like them!" And they were even prouder of the fact that, reckless and unafraid as they showed themselves, they had known how to take discipline, to play the game according to rules, that the wisest of English and French generals were saying, "They are good soldiers."

Château-Thierry and the weeks of struggle that drove back the Hun from the lovely Marne country, back through Soissons, back to the Aisne — those were great days for Sabinsport; and particularly they were great days for the War Board.

The War Board, said Dick to himself, has settled down to enjoy the war.

It spent its nightly sessions in recounting tales of heroism. Every list of citations for bravery was gone over item by item, under the leadership of Captain Billy. At first they set out to remember the names, those wonderful names, not only American, but Russian, Greek, Rumanian, Pole, Italian, Serb, Chinese and — yes, German — even German. "By the Jumping Jehoshaphat," Captain Billy would say, "we've got them all — every blamed nation on earth — and every one Americans. They have all got it — good American grit. It don't make any difference where their

names come from, there isn't one of them but dies with his face to the Hun." Over and over they recounted the gallant stories — of men going out from shelters into which they had been ordered, to carry in wounded, and sometimes receiving their own death bullet as they laid their man in a place of safety — of their quick strategy in surrounding machine gun nests and their fearless hand to hand fights with the crews. And then those tales of the way they ran in their prisoners. Captain Billy was never tired relating the historic tale of the sergeant from the New York East Side who came back with 159 prisoners and complained to his superior officer that "one had died on him."

And nothing so delighted Captain Billy as the tales that came over of the doughboy's directness and common sense in an emergency. "Just like them. Don't phase them a bit. Just as much at home over there as here. I guess they're teaching them down-trodden European countries the kind of men a free country makes. Read about the doughboy and his mules? Harness broke — mules ran away — turned them into a tree — smashed one — jumped out, looked at him, saw he was done up, shot him, rigged up and went ahead, — never said a word, never asked anybody anything, just did what was necessary. They say those French poilus haven't stopped talking about it yet. They would have held an inquest, sent in a report, and probably stopped the work of that train for a week. That's the difference."

Dick was deeply touched to notice how every now and then in the rejoicings somebody in the War Board would nod up at Lieutenant Mikey, looking down on them from the wall, and say, "What a pity he couldn't have been in it now; couldn't have fought with his own men. But he was our first one, we must never forget that." Nor did they forget their other heroes. Often

and often they would nod up to Albert on the wall, and say, "Hold on, old fellow, your time is coming." Or to Joffre, "Feeling pretty good to-night, ain't you, Papa Joffre?" Oh, the War Board was certainly enjoying the war — now that it was going their way.

While the War Board regaled itself with stories of doughboy exploits at Cantigny and Château-Thierry, the saving of Rheims, the capture of Soissons; while it speculated over the big gun — where it was, how it operated — quarreled over the merits of arms, and exhausted itself in devising methods of destroying Germany — the town outside, the busy, working town, seemed sometimes to Dick almost to be living in France with the boys. Quite wonderfully and naturally they had built up from what came to them in letters and news the life of their boys over there. Of course they were proud of their exploits, but they did not want to dwell too much on them; they meant ghastly wounds or death — what they wanted to know was just how the boys lived, and where, the kind of beds they slept on, the kind of food they ate, whether it was really true that when they fell ill they had the care that they ought to have; and all of this, this eagerness to know where the boys were and how they were getting on in detail, made every letter that came almost a matter of town importance.

It was quite amazing how the contents of these letters circulated. The very arrival of one was known, sometimes, in advance of its delivery, for the post office force took notice when a letter from anybody in the A. E. F. arrived, and I have known it more than once to happen that if a letter came in Saturday night — there was no Sunday delivery — one of the postal clerks would run immediately to the telephone and call up, "Hello, Mrs. B., here's a letter for you from Tom, if you want to come down and get it. None of us can

get away much before midnight." You can imagine how quickly Mrs. B. went or sent.

The great interest and excitement of the postmen's life in those days was delivering the letters from the A. E. F. It was the practice of these functionaries in Sabinsport to put the mail in the box outside, if you had one; to throw it on the steps if you had not; or sometimes, if it rained, to try your door and throw it in the hall; but whenever there was a letter from a soldier none of these things were sufficient. Your bell rang with an eager, insistent cry which said, "There's a letter from Tom." And the next morning, the probabilities are that the postman lingered a bit to see if you didn't come out and tell him personally something of what was in the letter. And you did it. Oh, how you loved to tell what was in the letter? And how it went up and down the town and everybody telephoned and compared it with what was in Frank's letter, or Will's letter.

After the letters, Sabinsport's great interest was *The Stars and Stripes*. There was no paper published on the globe so popular in the town. A half dozen of the boys had been inspired to send it home by the clever appeal of the paper itself. "Do the home folks a good turn by having us send them *The Stars and Stripes* every week," the editor said at the head of his page, in an appealing display type. "There are not many things you can do from this side of the water," he said, "for your folks or your old pal or that girl back home. *The Stars and Stripes* would come to them like another letter every week or another little present."

The doughboys had not passed it up, as he advised, and the paper came to be to the home folks all that he had prophesied. Intimate, natural, humorous, eloquent, the best bit of editing the war had inspired, *The Stars and Stripes* brought to Sabinsport such a sense of

how the boys were thinking and feeling and acting, the whole town was comforted and helped. One supreme consolation it brought — the certainty that whatever the war might be doing to their boys, it was not changing their tastes. *The Stars and Stripes* proved that. It was "just like them."

Although it was known that many of their men were with the divisions fighting along the Marne, and although every night when the *Argus* came, the first thing that the town turned to was the casualty list, they went a long time untouched — so long that Sabinsport came to have a curious kind of jealousy. The City, twenty-five miles away, had lost heavily. She rejoiced, and yet she somehow wanted to pay her price.

But when it came — poor little Sabinsport! It came like a stroke of lightning. One evening Dick was called up by Ralph's successor in the *Argus* office. "Parson," he said, in a broken voice, "I wish you would come down. It's dreadful! The casualty list has just come in — there are twelve of our men dead, Parson — twelve of Sabinsport's boys. Ralph's name is among them. How are we going to get it to the people? There is no notice to any family yet, as I know, and I cannot call them up. Won't you come down and help me?"

It was not long before Dick was bending over the list; and the two men were asking themselves who would better go here, who there, who's the friend of this family, who the friend of that? They called up the priest for the three of his own boys; the Rev. Mr. Pepper, who, in spite of his pacifism, still had kept a gentle heart, for one of his flock. They called up Jake Mulligan, and between them the sad duty was performed.

The news flew. All Sabinsport wept that night. The next morning there was laid at every door in town

— subscribers or not — a little extra sheet of the *Argus* — Sabinsport's Honor Roll. And first in the list was the name of Lieut. Michael Sullivan, killed at Delville Wood, July 15, 1916.

It fell to Dick to go to Patsy. It was nearly midnight when he called up Father McCullon and told him. "Wait until morning," the old man said, "and come yourself, Dick. Mother and I could never do it."

Patsy had been back in Sabinsport since the beginning of the year. After her marriage she lived near Ralph's camp until he had sailed in January. By a fortune which seemed to both of them miraculous, he had been promoted until he was a lieutenant in the Rainbow Division. He had sailed, believing that he would soon be in the trenches. To Patsy, as to him, this had been a matter of glad rejoicing. She had come back so proudly to Sabinsport that Mary Sabins had been shocked. "To think anybody," she had said to Patsy, "could rejoice when her husband was in danger of his life. I cannot understand it, Patsy, and you in your condition, too," — for Patsy was scarcely less proud or less open about the fact that Ralph was in France in the trenches than that she soon would be a mother — the mother of a little Ralph, she proudly announced, for she seemed to have no doubt in the world that she would bear a son. "Ralph wanted a son."

The boy had come in the spring. Never in her capable, vivid life had Patsy been so proud and so joyous.

And Ralph was dead, and Dick was on his way to the farm-house to tell her. It was early when he came up the walk — and Patsy, radiant and beautiful — oh, far more beautiful than she had ever been — met him at the door, for she had seen him coming. She needed no telling. With that divination of womankind whose loved ones are at the front, Patsy sensed that Dick

brought her sorrowful news of Ralph. She did not even lose her color, but, taking him by the hand, led him into the cheerful sitting room where, before the fire, little Ralph was cooing in his crib. She took the baby up, and standing straight and proud, said, "Tell me, Dick."

"Ralph's name is on the casualty list, Patsy — among the dead. But do not lose hope," he pled, "it may be a mistake."

"It is not a mistake, Dick. He knew it. I knew it. We fought it out together. I promised to live to raise our son. Take him, Dick — take him," and she held out the child, crumpling to the floor as Dick sprang to her side.

Stricken as she was — so stricken that in the coming days life itself seemed to ooze from her veins and she lay for hours in long white swoons, the spirit of her remained undaunted. She had made her sacrifice when she said good-by to her husband. As Ralph had had to fight like every man of passionate heart and living imagination to conquer his natural fear of death in battle, so Patsy had fought to conquer her fear of his loss. Both had won, for when the test came both were victorious.

Ralph, so they learned one day, had lost his life in the full tide of battle. His company had been ordered to secure a foothold on the high northern bank of a river to which the army had fought its way. They had been led with extraordinary skill and courage, but in crossing one after another of the officers had been killed until Ralph was left alone in command. He took his men through the last cruel shelling to the desired objective, but in the final push he was fatally wounded. Even then he had refused to give up and for hours continued to direct his men as they literally clawed their way into the side of the bluff. "He would

not die," wrote home one grieving young soldier, "until he knew we were safe."

And Patsy made her fight as bravely. She held her head high. Had she not little Ralph, who, so they had both agreed, was one day to carry on his father's work for justice and peace among men? If there were times when it seemed as if her brave heart must break with pain, no one ever saw her shed a tear or say other than, "I would not have held him back, no, not even to have him here to-day."

It was to the honor and the sanctification of Sabinsport that the bereaved took their sorrow as they did. It was more. Out of their loss there seemed to come to the town a mysterious illumination, the enlarged sense of what it was all about, which Dick had so desired for her, which he had felt so keenly she should have, to sustain her. Wounded and hurt as she was, the town had to find a reason, a great reason, to justify it all. Defending laws on sea or land that had grown out of past struggles between nations was not enough; vengeance was not enough, not even avenging wrongs as great as Belgium and the *Lusitania*. Sabinsport needed to feel that out of this sacrifice there should come some new conception of life, some greater guarantee of more joy and freedom to more people, some pledge that in future times there was hope of less sorrow, less hunger, less pain everywhere on the earth. This, she finally saw, was what it was all about; and in groping toward this realization there came to Sabinsport something that was akin to a new faith, and with this she was for the first time fully and unalterably reconciled to the Great War.

It was no longer grim determination, no longer hatred of an enemy that she despised, that held her to the undertaking. It was a large and luminous faith that out of it all a long step had been taken toward

realizing that new world to which, since the beginning of time, men have lifted their eyes.

It was amazing how the town softened under the touch of its sorrow, how many old feuds sank out of sight, how much warmer grew everybody's heart. "It's doing something to us, Dick," Reuben Cowder said to him one day. "Why, I even heard Captain Billy speak approvingly of Wilson to-day."

It did something to Dick. It made easier his renunciation of Nancy which he still believed was his duty. That was his part, his sacrifice, he told himself. He must give himself now to keeping alive, feeding this new sense that had come to the town; and he threw himself with enthusiasm into the work of explaining to Sabinsport the national aspirations and hopes that began to take form in the unfamiliar countries of Europe. At the camp, at the Boys' Club, in his church, and at the War Board, Dick made himself the advocate of Serbian and Bohemian, Czecho-Slav and Pole. For the first time in all Sabinsport's life, she began really to sense that these strange men who filled her mines and her factories carried in their hearts loves for their lands like hers for America; that they, too, had dreams — some of them coming down from hundreds of years of struggle — of freedom and equal opportunity in their own nations. And her chivalry, her sense of protection, her determination to help them see it through, grew with her knowledge.

It was perhaps quite natural that, as the days went on, Dick should come to feel that Sabinsport had had a change of heart so profound that it had softened even her bitterness against Germany, itself. It was this feeling that he might even talk mercifulness to Sabinsport now that led him into what afterwards was known as "the Parson's Big Break."

It was not until October that Dick was able to bring

himself to believe that at last the Allies had the upper hand. From the start he had seen the war as long — long — long. It was that that made him suffer so. Cantigny, Château-Thierry, the falling back to the Vesle — none of these things had really convinced him. But when the Americans captured St. Mihiel, following on the break in the North, he suddenly realized the splendid scheme on which the great French general was working. "She's beaten," he said, "she's beaten. It will take time, but we've got her." No longer was it, as the French had said it in that unquenchable faith of theirs — *On les aura*; it was no *On les a*.

And as the days went on and he became more and more certain, his imagination flew ahead to the time when the Allies would reach the borders of enemy territory. He had his theory about this: Germany would unconditionally surrender before she would allow the Allies to fight on her territory.

But he could not give up the idea that the Allies should enter Berlin — not as destroyers but as world peacemakers. He meditated much on this, and at last one October Sunday morning preached a sermon on the text: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty. And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

At the head of his notes he had put a title, "The Great Revenge." As he talked his imagination kindled, and almost before he knew it he fell into a rhapsody:

"In thinking of that great day — the day when victory is near and certain," he said, "I have dreamed a dream, and in this dream I have seen the Allied statesmen and their military leaders gathered for a final conference which they believed will be the last before the end of this greatest of human tragedies.

"With the terms for the world settlement outlined

and accepted, with a full knowledge of the military situation before them, with a sober certainty that victory is in their hands, though it may be delayed, the conference is ready to disband. And it is then that an American general, whom first the Allied military forces and later the Allied diplomats had come to listen to with respect, if not eagerness, not only for the knowledge and fine judgment that he brought to their councils but because of a quality of spiritual insight which many of them believed to amount to genius — it was then that this American general asked a hearing.

“ ‘As you know,’ he said, ‘I am in the fullest agreement with every conclusion of this conference. I believe that the military situation of the Allied armies has been rightly presented, that nothing has been concealed of either weakness or strength, that the conclusion that the enemy must soon yield is inevitable from the facts that have been laid before us. What I ask the privilege of saying to this conference will add nothing to what you already know, it will add nothing to the plan of world reorganization which has been suggested. It is not a matter on which action is required. It may be called a dream or a vision, as you please. I only beg that you will listen, and not deride, for what I have to say comes from an inner conviction so deep that to withhold it would be for me little better than treason to the great end of all this suffering, this labor of spirit and of mind through which we have gone in these many hard years.

“ ‘The enemy will soon yield. I am one of those that believe that he will yield at or before his last line of defense. I believe this, not because I think that line less strong than it has been represented, less strong than the enemy himself has boasted it to be — it may be the most nearly impregnable line of defense that has been constructed in all the history of the world —

I believe he will yield because I believe that yielding at this point is the inevitable result of his own lifelong military teachings.

“ ‘Germany has held that those people she wished to subdue could be frightened into submission. Her people have been schooled for years to believe that by inventing new and unheard of ways of destruction, by attacking the defenseless, by stealthily striking where the laws of war had forbidden men to strike, they could so terrorize the world that it would submit to her supremacy without long resistance. She has learned that neither the French nor the English, the Italian nor the American people can be terrorized. She has learned that free people have no fear of human devices, however hideous and destructive.

“ ‘But what is the logical result of this story of teaching on the minds of the people who teach it? This doctrine of frightfulness will — already has — acted as a boomerang. There is not a military man in this room who has not, from the beginning of his experience with the enemy, found that when their own methods were turned back they were the quickest to say “Enough.” When we turned their own infernal gas inventions against them they appealed to the laws of war. When, after months and months of endurance of their bombardment of peaceful towns and countrysides, England, in despair and rage, retaliated, they again appealed to the laws of war. The natural reaction of their own gospel is to make them and their peoples fear the things which they taught other nations would fear.

“ ‘Germany has given to the world the most awful exhibits of destructiveness that mortal man has ever conceived. We, who have marched through the torn and battered villages and homes of France and Belgium and Serbia, have been made old and gray by the things

that we have seen. She believed that this destruction would take the heart out of us. She did not know the peoples she attacked. And now her turn has come. My conviction is that those who have taught this frightfulness, and the people to whom they have taught it, will never have the moral or physical courage to run the risk of having applied to them what they have applied to us. The day we reach this last invincible line and make our first break in it — as we know we shall — that day the sword of the enemy will be laid down! They will not be able to face the horrors of fighting on their own land, of seeing their own villages, their own homes, undergoing the awful punishment which they have so wantonly given the villages and homes of other countries. They will yield. They will yield on the border. Gentlemen, we shall not be obliged to fight our way to Berlin. And I am one of those who will be glad when the time comes that we are not to take another life, not to devastate another mile of the earth's fair face; that we are not to batter down another cottage, or destroy another beautiful work of man's hands.

“ ‘But that does not mean that I believe that the Allied armies should not go to Berlin. What I have at this moment to propose to this conference is that when the day comes — as it surely will — that the German and the Austrian emperors and their high commands say to us, “We yield,” — the Allied armies shall say to them: “Gentlemen, you will yield in Berlin. We go to Berlin. But we go to your capital not as destroyers; we go as saviors of freedom.

“ ‘ “We shall make no claim upon you in crossing your land. We shall lead our armies — French, English, Italian, American — through your fertile fields, your pleasant villages, into your beautiful capital, without cost or pain or destruction to you. We shall take

with us our food, we shall ask no lodging for which we do not give fair return, and we shall pledge our honor that no woman suffer, even by word or look, from those hundreds of thousands of marching men."

"Gentlemen, our armies will do this if we ask it of them. To do it will give this people who have held as a religion the destructive notion of progress and power which has encircled the earth with woe, an exhibit of what free men really are. It will show them as no other act could do that in our interpretation of progress and power, there is no element of compulsion of others or of injury to others. If we can take these hundreds of thousands of men of ours into Berlin and leave no trace of destruction, no story of injustice behind us, we will give the world the greatest exhibit of the control that free men can exercise over themselves that it has ever seen or conceived. We shall prove the Biblical saying that "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he who taketh a city."

"I ask, then, that when Germany yields — as she soon will — we say, "We receive your sword in Berlin." And that we march our armies there for that great ceremony. You will say that this is too much to ask of armies. Gentlemen, I am willing to pledge the American army to that great act of self-control."

"The General sat down. For a long time there was silence at the table, and then the oldest, the least smiling, the longest in arms of the English staff, arose and said: 'I pledge the English Tommies to march to Berlin without injury to man or woman or child.' A white haired Italian sprang to his feet: 'You may count on us,' he cried. Then slowly the great French general, to whose genius the campaign soon to finish was due, arose. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'you all realize what it would mean to the French poilus who have seen their country so obliterated that many of them

cannot even trace the lines of the little farms on which they were born, who know that when they go back to the villages in which they and their families once lived, they will not be able to find the spot where their homes stood, you must know what it would mean to these men to march into Germany as conquerors, to see her fields still peaceful and fertile, her villages still untouched, and with this bitter contrast before their eyes, neither by look or act to show hate or insult. Yet, if this conception of our American friend ever becomes possible, I pledge the French *poilu* to that majestic undertaking.'

"There was but one to hear from — a king — a king who knew that scores of his fairest towns and cities, with all their treasured work of centuries of labor and skill and love, were in hopeless, blood-stained ruins — who knew that thousands of his brave and honest countrymen and countrywomen had been dragged from the remnants of homes left them, to do the bidding of the enemy in his own land; who knew that, scattered in foreign lands were little children of his realm who never would know even the names to which they had been born.

"And the conference was still, and the hearts of all were big with pity, looking on this king who sat with bowed head. Long minutes passed before, rising proudly, he lifted to them a face which bore the look of one who comes fresh from a great struggle and a great victory, and in the quiet voice they had learned to know, the king said: 'Gentlemen, I pledge you that the Belgian army will march to Berlin and leave behind it no shattered wall, no mutilated old man, no outraged woman, no orphaned child.' "

The rhapsody was over. Dick stopped, a little breathless. Never before in all his experience as a

speaker had he so lost himself. He blinked a little, then suddenly was conscious of a curious change in his audience — disapproval — almost hostility. What was the matter? It threw him off his balance a bit, and he finished his sermon haltingly. They went out stiff, disapproving backbones. What in the world had he done?

He went into the vestry room, saying to himself, "What is the matter?" It was very common for the vestrymen to come around and say, "That was fine, Ingraham. Just what ought to be said," but to-day the only person that waited on him at the door as he came out was Miss Sarah Kenton, a lady of sixty or so, whom he and Ralph were accustomed to call, "Our Intellectual." Miss Sarah had had a literary experience, she had written books. There was no subject which ever came up on which she did not have a pronounced opinion. It must be confessed that she held most of Sabinsport in awe. With Dick, she had always been as nearly humble as was possible for her, for Dick was a man who had seen most of the world which Miss Sarah had not. Besides, his reading and thinking, even she admitted, was much broader and mellower than hers. Almost invariably Miss Sarah approved of Dick, but this morning when he came out she was waiting for him very rigid and very stern, and what she said was to the point.

"You have made a great mistake, Mr. Ingraham, in your sermon this morning. You have outraged us and you have injured yourself. No matter what we would *do* if we were given the direct alternative of sparing Germany or injuring her — an alternative which can only be hypothetical, and therefore should not be discussed now even as a 'mere dream' — no matter, I say, what we would *do* if face to face with such an alternative, we don't want people to talk to us

now about sparing the smiling fields and cheerful little happy homes of Germany! It isn't that we are blood-thirsty, but we are nauseated, Richard Ingraham, at talking about the blessed state of Germany compared with the desolation she has made in other countries. We don't want to hear about it."

And Miss Sarah turned on her heel and walked down the street, indignation and disgust in every tap of her shoe on the pavement.

What Miss Sarah had so pointedly put straight to Dick himself, his retiring congregation was saying in more or less abbreviated and moderated form to one another. "I can't see it," said one; "it's looking too far ahead to talk like that. Besides, it sounds like peace propaganda to me, and I won't stand for that, even from the Domine, much as I have always believed in him."

"It's pacifist talk," said another. "Makes me feel as if we'd been harboring a serpent in our bosom through all these years. It might be all very well to talk about a peaceful walk to Berlin if the Germans were not Germans, but they are Germans, the people who have stood for all these atrocities, who have been militarized out of all semblance to human beings, they must have their lesson. It's a church for a church, a cottage for a cottage, I think."

"He's all wrong," said another. "Get them with their backs to the wall and they would fight like hell, for they've got it into their heads that our men would do every fearful thing to their women and children that they have done to ours."

The air was thick with disapproval that day in Sabinsport of the Rev. Richard Ingraham; and suspicion gathered and gathered as the day went on. Could it be that they had been mistaken, that he really was at heart a pacifist?

The day was to come — and it was not far distant — when all these indignant patriots were to do their best to make amends for their resentment.

Under the great burst of joyous relief which the news of the signing of the armistice caused in Sabinsport, her anger at Dick began to soften. As the days went on and they actually saw at least the spirit of his dream coming true — their own boys crossing into the enemy's country in orderly fashion, going about the enemy's streets in self-control, even holding the enemy's children on their knees and joining in their Christmas trees and Christmas carols — a kind of wonder seized them. It was a prophecy they had listened to. Even Miss Sarah Kenton was one day to come to Dick and express her appreciation of his sermon, as frankly as she had just expressed her disapproval.

But all that was for a later day. There is no question at all but that, at the moment, Richard Ingraham had deeply outraged Sabinsport spirit of righteous indignation against the Germans which he had done more than any other man to awaken.

He went back to his study in the rectory after his interview with Miss Sarah and sat for a long time, considering what he had done. "Good Lord!" he said, "I certainly have put my foot in it. They really think I am a pacifist," and he threw back his head and laughed aloud. But it was a rueful laugh. Disapproval was a new experience for the young man. He had had nothing but affectionate approval from the day that Sabinsport first made his acquaintance. He could not remember a time in all these years of speaking to them that his sermons had not met with kindly appreciation, and now? Why, they had walked out of that church as if they thought him a German spy.

And yet, underneath his chagrin, there was a certain exaltation. "She has a mind of her own, Sabinsport,

and she is not afraid to show it. You can trust her to take care of her own, even against her own. But what a climb I will have to get back!" And then quickly the thought came, "I wonder if Nancy will feel as they do?" That gave him a cold heart, almost a physical sickness. He could bear everything but to have Nancy look at him as the people had when he first came out of his rhapsody and realized their faces.

He put it through bravely. At the evening service there was the smallest number of people that he ever remembered to have seen, but he talked exactly as he had planned.

Monday had always been for him a play day. Usually he started off in the morning for a long tramp, and since he had established his friendly, homelike relations with Nancy, oftener than not he made it a point to walk into her living room at half-past four or five for a cup of tea. Reuben Cowder usually made it a point, too, to get home by five on Mondays, knowing Dick would be there, for Reuben Cowder had grown fonder as the months went by of the young parson, and sometimes he said to himself, "I wish it were Dick and not Otto that she cared for. What a son he would make."

This habit of Dick's was known to Patsy. Patsy had been stirred to wrath by the echoes that had reached her before night of Sunday and all through Monday morning of Dick's pro-Germanism. What utter stupidity, she had said. Of course it's nothing but a reaction from the uplift they have been wallowing in. Angry as she was at the thought of any criticism of Dick, she was willing to slur even the spirit which had taken possession of the town and in which she as much as Dick had rejoiced. And to Patsy as to Dick, the only real alarm in the outbreak was that it would reach Nancy and that she might be influenced.

For Patsy you see had come to believe that the two were in love.

"I think, Little Ralph," she said, talking aloud to the baby, "it's time for your mother to take a decisive hand. He was the best friend your father ever had. If it had not been for him you would not have been here, little boy. If Nancy Cowder doesn't love him, she ought to. At least she is not going to be turned against him now by this senseless gossip." And so Patsy, whose anguished heart was becoming braver and braver day by day in service to others, arrived at the McCullon farm just about the time that Nancy came in from camp.

"I have come to lunch, Nancy," Patsy announced. "I want to know if you have heard what Sabinsport is doing to Dick."

"Doing to Dick?" Nancy cried, turning white. "Why, what do you mean?"

"She does care!" Patsy said to herself. "They are doing a cruel thing; they are accusing him of treason — he — he who has led us all into the light, who showed Ralph the way, who gave me Ralph. They are badgering him, heckling him, Nancy. And all out of their stupid, stupid, wicked, revengeful spirits."

"But what — what do you mean?" Nancy cried, still white and trembling.

And Patsy, having made her impression, put aside her eloquence, and told her what she knew of the sermon that had aroused resentment in the town. As she went on, relief, tenderness, amusement chased one another across Nancy's unconscious face.

"Oh, I understand, Patsy. You needn't defend Richard Ingraham to me. He ought to have known better, though. He ought to have known the town better. Why, Sabinsport really at heart was never so

bitter against Germany as she is to-day. It was foolish, foolish of him; but it's wicked, wicked of them to doubt him. He has led us all. Why, my father, Patsy. See what he has done for my father, and for me! Why, he brought me back. Never would father have found me if it had not been for him."

It was a very satisfied Patsy that sat down at the lunch table, but it was also a very curious one. There was one point that needed clearing up, and that was Otto Littman. And so, with a calculated unconsciousness that Nancy didn't catch at all, Patsy said, "I wish I knew, just for my own guidance, what there is in all the suspicion against Otto Littman. They are saying that he has done something fine, that has made up for all his early defense of Germany; but nobody seems to know what it is."

And Nancy, quite unguarded, told her as much as she dared of what Otto himself had told her in confession, of how he had been carried away by the German dream of world empire, of how his vanity had led him in the first years of the war to aid the plotters in America, of how he had come to his senses when he saw that violence against life and property, as well as the spreading of German ideas (which he had considered legitimate), was intended, of his break with Max, of his determination to win back the confidence of Sabinsport, and of his plea that Nancy, whom he had always loved, the one woman whom he had ever thought to make his wife, should help him.

"I could not do it, Patsy," she said, with tears; "but it has almost broken my heart not to stand by him as a friend in his hard, uphill fight. I understand perfectly how Otto was deluded. I know his vanity; and he has done a noble thing and the day will come when Sabinsport will understand, after the war is over. But it hurts me, oh, you don't know how it hurts me,

not to be able to help. But what can I do? I do not love him. I shall never love him."

And Patsy, the case quite clear in her mind, went back to Young Ralph, satisfied that she had done a good afternoon's work.

It was a couple of hours later that Dick walked in on Nancy. Possibly, he said to himself, she had not heard of the sermon of the day before, for she came running down the steps to greet him, saying, "You are late. I hoped you would come." It even seemed to him she was warmer in her greetings than usual.

They were hardly in before Reuben Cowder's car drew up, and he came into the drawing room. His greeting to Dick was curt and stern. He neither delayed nor hesitated about expressing his disapproval.

"What is this I hear about that sermon of yours yesterday, Ingraham? They tell me you talked some kind of twaddle about a peaceful entrance into Berlin, that you don't want the Huns punished, that you don't want any disturbance of their lands, that you propose to leave these brigands and murderers untouched, their spoils in their hands, to let them get away with their infamous atrocities. If that's the way you feel, I don't want you in my house."

There was a sudden little stir on one side of the room. Dick thought of it afterwards as something exactly like a bird fluttering out of its nest, and flying to his side. And there was Nancy, standing straight and looking into her father's eye — Cowder look for Cowder look.

"Stop that, Father," she said. "I know what Dick said. I know exactly what he meant. No revenge could be so great as what he planned." Her hand was laid protectingly on Dick's arm. She stood, his defender, blazing with understanding and sympathy. She had said "Dick" — it was the first time in all their acquaintance.

And Reuben Cowder had a great light. For a "hard business man," it was quite extraordinary that he could divine that this was possibly the great hour in the lives of these two young people, that possibly it was not Otto, after all; and, with a gruff, "I beg your pardon, Ingraham," he left the room.

The girl did not stir from where she stood. She did not take her hand from his arm. She only turned a very white face straight up to him.

"You said 'Dick,'" he said slowly. "You meant it, Nancy?"

"I meant it — Dick."

Then the Rev. Richard Ingraham did the most sensible thing he ever did in his life, he put his hand over the cold one on his arm, and said, "I love you, Nancy Cowder."

And the reply came swiftly, unhesitatingly, "I love you, Dick."

An hour later the two came out to the veranda, the look of glory still on their faces. In a very few minutes — so few that he might have been accused of waiting around the corner for their appearance, — Reuben Cowder joined them. Dick went straight to the point: "I have asked Nancy to marry me, Mr. Cowder. She has said, Yes. What do you say?"

"Well," said Reuben Cowder, "I say I would rather have you for a son than any man I ever knew."

The three sat long on the veranda in the warm, deepening, October twilight, looking out over the great valley in its glorious autumn coloring, down to a segment of that curve of the great river above which Sabinsport lay. It was not of the past that they talked, it was not of Sabinsport's struggles and sorrows, it was not of the war news of the day; it was of the future. To all three of them, Reuben Cowder as well as Dick and

Nancy, the last hour had opened the new world for which the war had been fought.

"It will soon be over," Reuben said. "We've got them, sure thing. We must think now of the future, Dick. There are a lot of changes coming to Sabinsport. There will be things doing here when the boys get back. I will need you both. I am old. I have the old ways; but I have learned something since you and Ralph Gardner came to this town, and I'm not so old that I can't learn more. I must do it, for we must reckon with those stacks there."

He nodded his head to the opening he had cut long ago in the noble trees which ran down the long slope of the great lawn, an opening that he always carefully preserved for it brought into the landscape from the veranda the tall smoke stacks of the wire mills.

Dick's mind flew back to the day a dozen years before when he had walked over the hills and caught his first view of the town. There were but four stacks that day, there were twelve now, and from every one of the twelve black smoke rose, straight into the clear air, and they said as clear and loudly to him now as they had so long ago, "We are the strong things here, we are the things to be reckoned with."

Yes, they had great struggles for great things coming, he and Reuben Cowder, and Nancy Cowder — his wife.

THE END

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